

THE
PRACTICAL EXPOSITOR:
OR, AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,
IN THE FORM OF A
PARAPHRASE;
WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES IN THEIR PROPER PLACES
FOR FURTHER EXPLICATION,

AND
SERIOUS RECOLLECTIONS AT THE CLOSE OF EVERY CHAPTER.
TO WHICH IS ADDED,
AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE OF THE PRINCIPAL THINGS CONTAINED
IN THE PARAPHRASE, ESPECIALLY IN THE NOTES.

For the Use of the FAMILY and CLOSET.

By JOHN GUYSE, D.D.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

VOL. VI.

CONTAINING

THE GENERAL EPISTLES OF JAMES, PETER, JOHN,
AND JUDE; AND THE REVELATION OF
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

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A PRAC.

A PRACTICAL E X P O S I T I O N

OF THE

GENERAL EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE

J A M E S,

IN THE FORM OF A

P A R A P H R A S E.

THE PREFACE TO THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THIS Epistle is commonly supposed to have been wrote by that apostle *James*, who was the son of *Alpheus*, and styled *James the less*, and the brother of our Lord. (See the notes on *Mat. x. 3.* and *1 Cor. xv. 7.*) And it is called a *general* epistle, probably, because it was wrote, not to any particular person, or church, but to *professing Christians* at large, though not exclusive of the *unbelievers* of the twelve tribes of *Israel*, wheresoever they were dispersed through several countries, as appears from *chap. v. 1.*—6. and some other places: And therefore the *inscription* is not to *Christians* under any distinguishing character of them; but only to the *twelve tribes* in general; nor is the *salutation* in the usual strain of *grace and peace*, or the like, but only of *greeting*; nor is any *benediction* added at the close.

The *divine authority* of this epistle is sufficiently established in *Dr. Whitty's* preface to it. The *time* of its being wrote is thought to have been about the year of our Lord 60, when the destruction of *Jerusalem* was approaching, in the year 72; and its chief design was to remonstrate against the *corruption of manners*, which had spread among that people; many of which seemed to be greatly addicted to pride, contention, and worldly-mindedness, and had perverted the gospel doctrine of *justification alone by faith in Christ*, which some of them had turned into licentiousness in practice, if not also in principle, directly contrary to its holy nature and design, and utterly inconsistent with a saving interest in its blessings; as also to remind them of the desolation that was coming upon them, and to comfort the faithful among them under all the sufferings which they at present did, or in a little time might, undergo from *Jewish* infidels for the sake of Christ, but which would soon have an end.

The apostle, after the inscription and salutation, encourages true believers to bear their trials with chearfulness and patience; to maintain good thoughts of God, and charge themselves with all sinful effects of their temptations; to keep a watch over their turbulent passions; and to receive the word of God with meekness, and put it into practice, *chap. i.* Cautions them against shewing a partial and undue respect to the rich, and treating the poor with contempt and neglect, under feigned expressions of pity toward them; takes occasion from thence to illustrate that part of his design, which related to the insignificancy of all professions of faith in Christ for justification, without some proof of its sincerity by fruitfulness in good works, which he confirms by the evidences that *Abraham* and *Rahab* gave of the truth and prevalent power of their faith in acts of holy obedience, *chap. ii.* Proceeds to guard them against reviling, censorious, and imperious language; shewing what mischief is done by an unruly tongue, and how inconsistent an indulgence of it is with the Christian temper and profession, and with heavenly wisdom, *chap. iii.* Reproves them for their litigious, proud, worldly, and envious spirit, which marred and defeated their prayers, and was contrary to God and his law; and for their disregard to Providence, in pursuing their secular affairs, *chap. iv.* Denounces the judgments of God against those of the unbelieving *Jews*, as soon to come upon them, who heaped up riches to themselves by unrighteous gains. And then, turning again to the Christian converts, he exhorts them to wait with patience for deliverance from the work of their enemies, who should fall by approaching calamities, and for the better blessings of the world to come, without envying those that were in more affluent circumstances of this life, than themselves; and especially to avoid rash and common swearing; to behave with a suitable Christian spirit in prosperity and adversity; to acknowledge their faults to, and offer such prayers for, one another, as God will hear and answer; and to do what in them lay, for the conversion of those that had lived in erroneous and sinful courses, contrary to the truth and holiness of the gospel, *chap. v.*

C H A P. I.

The apostle prefaces his epistle with a general salutation of the Jews in their dispersion, 1. Addresses himself, first of all, to the Christian-converts among them, directing them how to make a due improvement of their troubles, how to apply to God under them, and how to behave in prosperous and adverse circumstances, 2,—12. Warns them, not to impute to God any temptations to sin; but to look upon all evil as proceeding from themselves, and all good from God, 13,—18. Infers the duties of watching against a rash and furious temper, and of receiving the word of God with meekness, and living according to it, 19,—25. And shews the difference between vain pretences, and real religion, 26, 27.

TEXT.

JAMES a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

PARAPHRASE.

JAMES, who is, and counts it a high honour to be, a ministering servant of the God of Israel, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, and the only Mediator between God and man, * sends this epistle, by divine authority, to all and every one of the twelve tribes of Israel (Acts xxvi. 7.) especially the professors of Christianity among them, into whose hands it may come, in what nation soever they be dispersed, whether by former captivities, or by later severities; and he heartily wishes them all manner of blessings, relating to this world, and that which is to come.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.

2 As to those of you, my dear brethren, who are so, not only after the flesh, but in a spiritual relation, and who, for your profession of faith in Christ, suffer many troubles of various kinds, which ye do not make to yourselves by your own guilt and folly, but are cast into by the unrighteous violence of wicked men, under the infinitely wise permission and sovereign disposals of the holy God, who graciously orders and over-rules them by his providence, and sanctifies them by his spirit, for the trial and improvement of your faith; (ver. 3. and 1 Pet. i. 7.) Be not ye discouraged at them; but rather esteem it your honour, and matter of the greatest spiritual rejoicing, that ye are counted worthy to suffer shame, and other hardships, for his name; (Acts v. 31.) and so to bear a noble testimony to him, for his glory, and the advantage of your own, as well as others souls.

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your

3 As being fully persuaded in your own minds, upon the foot of divine revelation, and having an experience

NOTE.

* A Servant of God, and of the Lord of God, even of the Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ, (Θεοῦ καὶ Κυρίου ἡμετέρου Χριστοῦ) as no article follows (καὶ) and in the σου δούλος) may be translated a servant Greek. (See the note on Tit. ii. 13.)

your faith worketh patience.

perience in yourselves, that they are designed of God for the trying, proving, and rendering approved,* the truth and efficacy of your faith in Christ, and constancy in the profession of it, as what will stand the test; and that every such trial of your faith has a powerful influence, through the concurring operation of the Spirit, (1 Pet. iv. 14.) to produce and improve a calm submission, and persevering resignation to the sovereign will, and holy providence of God in the most afflictive dispensations, which in a special manner minister occasions, and call for, and inure the soul unto the exercise of patience, without murmuring at his hand in them, or being enraged against the instruments of them.

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing.

4 But, as ever ye would reap this happy fruit of your trials, let patience take its own proper course, without check or disturbance from your sinful passions; and give full scope to its genuine exercises, as consisting of a meek and humble, composed, resigned, and chearful frame of spirit; and that not only in the first onsets of one and another trouble, but with perseverance, under every variety and continuance of them, all your days; to the end that (ye) ye may be complete Christians, (see the note on 1 Cor. ii. 6.) and arrive at the greatest eminence in this, together with every other grace; and so may not be deficient in any thing that belongs to the Christian state and character, or that is necessary to your holding on, and holding out to the end, and finishing your course with joy, which shall issue in a perfect freedom from all sin and sorrow, and in the complete holiness and happiness of the heavenly state.

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

5 In order to the attaining of this, if any of you, amidst all your straits and difficulties, (λυπται) is destitute of spiritual wisdom, (as the best of us all, more or less, certainly are) to direct him in every case, and particularly how to judge of his afflictions, how to behave in a becoming manner under them, and how to make a suitable use and improvement of them, as may be most for the divine glory, and his own soul's advantage; let such an one, under a humbling sense of his own weakness and folly, and of the insufficiency

N O T E.

* The word (δοκιμω) here rendered the trying of your faith, signifies that by which our faith is tried, and proved unto approbation, as pure and genuine, in allusion to the trying of metals by a fire; and is a different word from that which is used in Rom. v. 4 where the apostle says, tribulation works patience, and pa-

tience experience, (δοκιμην) which signifies the effect of the trying; and so that, which tries our faith, works patience in its fruits and effects; and the patience, that is tried and proved, works the happiest experience. (See the paraphrase on Rom. v. 4.)

of any creature whatsoever, to conduct him in a right way, apply with earnest application and prayer, through Jesus Christ, to the God of all light and grace, for the leadings and guidance of his word, providence, and spirit, who is readier to give, than we are to ask, needful blessings of him; who bountifully distributes them with a free and open heart and hand to all sorts of men, and particularly to all that sincerely and in a right manner ask them of him; and who is so rich in mercy, and of so great kindness, as not to reproach humble supplicants, or twit them with their ignorance, folly, and unworthiness, or with the many favours which he has already bestowed upon them, and they have misimproved; nor will he disdain to hear and answer their petitions, how often soever they solicit him for still farther supplies; and he will graciously afford all seasonable counsel and assistances, that are needful for such a praying Christian. (See *Prov. iii. 5, 6.*)

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.

6 But it is not his merely pouring out words, or uttering a prayer before the Lord, that will meet with his gracious answer; no, if he would succeed in his suit, it is to be presented, with a firm dependence on Christ, and on the wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness of God in him for a performance of his promises, without any staggering at them through unbelief: (*Rom. iv. 20.*) For he that gives way to distrusts, questionings, and sinful jealousies, whether God can, or will perform his gracious promises, is as unsteady and restless in principle and practice, as a wave of the sea, which sometimes swells upwards, and then sinks downwards, and is driven one way and another, backward and forwards, in a tumultuous manner by a stormy wind.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

7 Let not therefore any man of such a diffident and fluctuating spirit, which dishonours, instead of giving glory to God, flatter himself as though his unstable and unbelieving prayer shall be answered, or that he shall receive the wisdom, or any good thing, which he asks of the Lord, in accomplishment of promises that belong only to true believers.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

8 A man of a double heart, (*Ps. xii. 2.*) that is divided between hope and despondency, or between God and corrupt affections to the world, inclining now one way, and then another, like those that haltered between two opinions about God and Baal; (*1 Kings xviii. 21.*) or he, who would fain serve both God and Mammon, (*Matth. vi. 24.*) is unsettled in religion, and continually hesitating, fickle, and perplexed in all his thoughts, words, and actions about it;

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which

it; and so brings nothing to pass, nor can expect to speed in his prayers.

9 But, to return to what has been said about rejoicing in trials, (*ver. 2.*) Any brother in Christ that has a fixed faith in him, and in the power and grace of God through him, may warrantably plead and safely rely on every promise of his covenant. Upon this consideration, let him that is poor in outward circumstances, and oppressed by persecutions, and is of a lowly spirit, suitable to such an afflicted condition, glory (*καυχώμεθα*) in the thought, that he is highly advanced to all the spiritual riches of faith, as an heir of the kingdom of heaven, (*chap. ii. 5.*) and to the honour of those believers, to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ to suffer for his sake, and upon whom the spirit of glory and of God resteth. (*Phil. i. 29. and 1 Pet. iv. 14.*)

10 And, on the other hand, as to any Christian brother, who, amidst all his affluence, is brought to have low thoughts of himself, and of all his earthly enjoyments, as mean, precarious, and perishing, and to be willing to give them all up for Christ; or who, having had abundance of the possessions of this life, is now reduced to poverty for the sake of his holy profession, and is of an humble spirit, let him rejoice in the happy exchange of temporal wealth and prosperity for the incomparably better and everlasting riches of grace and glory: Because, supposing that he were not to be deprived of his worldly enjoyments while he lives, he must soon die away from them; and then all his flourishing state in them will perish with him, like the fading flower of the field. (*Is. xl. 6, 7.*)

11 For as the sun in the firmament no sooner rises in the full strength of its scorching heat, like that which beat upon the head of *Jonah*, and was attended with a vehement East wind, (*Jon. iv. 8.*) but it immediately causes the flourishing grass, or verdant stem to wither; and its beautiful flower sickens, droops, and dies; and all the glory of its lively, gay, and florid appearance is destroyed: So the man of wealth and grandeur, that has no better portion than the splendid and pleasing enjoyments of this present life, shall pine away in his iniquity, and be cut off, by one or another providence, in the midst of all his schemes and designs for this world, and of all his prosperity and honour.

12 Happy, inexpressibly happy, is the man who is called, and has wisdom and grace to enable him in a Christian manner, to bear the greatest tribulation, even to the loss of all things here for Christ: For when he has passed through the trial, and is

(*δοξασμένος*)

which the Lord (*Jehovah*) approved of God, as having endured it with faith and patience, humble submission and holy fortitude, and stood the proof, he shall come off a conqueror; and, in opposition to the garland of fading herbs and flowers, which victors were crowned with in the *Grecian* games, shall receive the immortal and incorruptible crown of all heavenly life, blessedness, and glory; which the Lord Jesus, the great Judge of all, and God the Father on his account, has freely promised, and will certainly give at the last day, to all those, who, from a principle of faith in Christ, supremely desire, esteem, and delight in him, and look and long for his appearing in all his glory to their complete salvation. (*Hab. ix. 28.*) They therefore may well rejoice in all tribulations for his sake.

13. Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

13 If then any professor of his name, instead of improving in grace and holiness, should fall into impatient murmurings, distrust of God, and apostacy, or any other sin, by means of the afflictions that beset him, and are suited, designed, and blessed, for the good of such as make a proper use of them, let him not dare to think, or say, that when he is thus tried, and it becomes an occasion of sin to him, God, whose providence ordered those trials, drew him into sin by them. It is shocking impiety to bring any such charge against him: For God is so infinitely pure and holy in his nature and will, designs and operations, that it is absolutely impossible for him to be prevailed upon by any occurrence from without, or any motion within himself, to do the least iniquity; nor can he, consistent with his own absolute perfection, entice or persuade, much less inwardly influence, and much less still ever necessitate, any one to commit the least moral evil, * which he utterly abhors. (*Habak. i. 13.*)

14. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

14 But the true and proper cause of any man's being induced by outward afflictions to revolt from God, or sin against him, lies not in those dispensations of providence, but in himself. Whenever they have such a malignant effect upon him, it is owing to his own corrupt heart and wicked inclinations, which

N O T E

* The evil here spoken of is undoubtedly moral evil, or the evil of sin, as it is determinately explained in the two next verses. But the evil of affliction or punishment is quite a different thing, with respect to which God says, *I make peace and create evil; and shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord has not done iniquity, and destroyed themselves.* (*Isa. xlv. 7. and Amos iii. 6.*) And

which violently drag him off (*ἐκλαμψε*) from the way of truth and holiness, and from a profession of Christ's name, and which (*δολιχόμενος*) beguile and delude him into sin and apostasy, under some specious deceitful appearances of carnal ease and pleasure, or worldly advantage that he purposes to himself by it, as a fish is caught and drawn out of the water by the hook, that is covered with a tempting bait.

15 Then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

17 Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

18 On the contrary, he is so infinitely far from this, that every good thing we enjoy, relating to this world and that which is to come; every bounty of Providence, and intellectual endowment, and every gift of a spiritual and holy kind, which has no mixture of sin in it, but tends to the perfecting of our nature and happiness; all, and nothing but, good in the natural, moral, and spiritual world, is originally and effectively from God, whose throne is in the heavens, and whose kingdom rules over all; (Psal. ciii. 19.) and it descends from on high, and is communicated to us from him, who is himself light, without any darkness at all; (1 John i. 5.) and is the Fountain, Author, and Giver of all sorts of light, rational and religious, as well as corporal, of all the light of knowledge, holiness and happiness, grace and glory; and who is unchangeably the same in himself and in his will and purposes, (Mal. iii. 6.) without the least alteration, * or any mixture of

15 It is then, and then only, when the evil propensity in the thoughts of a man's own heart, which is itself sin in *embrio*, (Prov. xxiv. 9.) has gained the approbation and free consent of the will, that it produces *actual* sin, as the genuine fruit of its own depraved inclination; and actual sin, when it is completed, allowed of, persisted in, and indulged with impenitence and unbelief, not only renders him obnoxious to, but will certainly issue in everlasting misery, as its proper fruit and wages, (Rom. v. 21. 23. see the note there) which is the second death; and so his destruction is, and will be of himself.

16 Take heed then, my dear brethren, (*μὴ πλανάσθε*) lest any of you run astray from the truth of the gospel, and wander into such abominably erroneous, blasphemous, and injurious conceptions of the holy and blessed God, or of his ways, as to imagine that he is or can be the author of sin, or doth any thing to encourage or promote it.

17 On the contrary, he is so infinitely far from this, that every good thing we enjoy, relating to this world and that which is to come; every bounty of Providence, and intellectual endowment, and every gift of a spiritual and holy kind, which has no mixture of sin in it, but tends to the perfecting of our nature and happiness; all, and nothing but, good in the natural, moral, and spiritual world, is originally and effectively from God, whose throne is in the heavens, and whose kingdom rules over all; (Psal. ciii. 19.) and it descends from on high, and is communicated to us from him, who is himself light, without any darkness at all; (1 John i. 5.) and is the Fountain, Author, and Giver of all sorts of light, rational and religious, as well as corporal, of all the light of knowledge, holiness and happiness, grace and glory; and who is unchangeably the same in himself and in his will and purposes, (Mal. iii. 6.) without the least alteration, * or any mixture of

shade,

NOTE

* With whom is no variableness, the sun, which appear different in the East, in its meridian height, and in the West: And neither shadow of turning (*οὐ γένηται*)

will beget in us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

made, by turning from moral good to evil, in his own nature, or in any of his thoughts or dispensations: We may therefore be sure that no unrighteous evil, but all good comes from him.

18 We, who believe, have a most eminent and endearing demonstration, that the best of all blessings derive from him; as it is not from any wisdom, or power, worthiness, or merit in us, but merely of his own good will, and sovereign pleasure, according to his abundant mercy, that he has regenerated and begotten us to a lively hope of an everlasting inheritance, (*John i. 13. 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.*) by means of the gospel, which is his true and faithful word, and is rendered efficacious, in the hand of the Spirit, for producing the new birth, and all the holiness and happiness that ensue upon it. (See *John xvii. 17. 1 Cor. iv. 15. and 1 Pet. i. 23.*) And he has done this for us, that we, like the first fruits under the law, might be consecrated to him, as his peculiar property, and the most excellent kind of all his creatures; and as the pledge and earnest of his gathering in a harvest of souls to himself, from among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, by a new creation of them in *Christ Jesus unto good works*, (*Eph. ii. 10.*) in which he first began with us, the converted *Jews*.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

19 Therefore, my dear Christian brethren, let every one of you, suitable to his character and obligations, as a new creature, be ready to hear, and attend to what God says in his word, about himself, and about the great and good things, that he has done, and promised to do for his people: Let not such an one dare to speak reproachfully of God, or of his ways of providence and grace; nor be rash and hasty in setting up for a preacher, or in giving his sense of difficult texts of Scripture before he has well considered them; and, as ever he would not speak unadvisedly with his lips, let him keep a curb upon his

N O T E

(*ἡ τροπή τοῦ νομοῦ*) seems to allude to departures of the sun from us between the tropics, that cast different shades. But there is no variation in the nature or will of God, who is always the same, and whose dispensations, how various soever, are all according to the counsel of his own will. (*Eph. i. 11.*) And there is no inconsistency in this with those passages, that speak of his repenting of any good, or evil, which he by his word, or providence, or both, seemed to have intended to perform: For they relate, not to any alteration in the mind or decree of God himself, but only in his external

methods of procedure, when they are such as men use to make upon any change in their own purposes: But as God infallibly foreknew all events from eternity, he always invariably determined to alter his various dispensations, as he knew the circumstances of things would make it fit for him so to do. To suppose the contrary would argue a most unsufferable self-subversive imperfection in the Almighty, infinitely wise and blessed God, and in the certainty and steadiness of his views and designs, as the great Governor of the world.

his passions, and take heed of an angry wrathful temper in disputing for, or against points of controversy; or in treating any person with haughty contempt and severity, that differs from him.

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

20 For the unguarded heat and intemperate fury of a man's own passions, which, whatever be pretended, proceed from pride, selfishness, and impatience of contradiction, and not from a regular and sacred zeal, are far from serving God's righteous cause, which needs no such unhallowed methods to support it; and are far from recommending to others his way of righteousness by Jesus Christ, as revealed in the gospel; (*Rom. i. 17.*) or the practice of righteousness, which God enjoins and approves: (*1 Cor. xv. 34.* and *Psal. xi. 7.*) They, on the contrary, cloud and hurry a man's own thoughts, and render him incapable of speaking aright for God; and at the same time prejudice the minds of others against all that he offers to bring them over unto righteousness.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

21 Labour therefore to cast away, with abhorrence, all those corrupt affections, which defile the soul, saying to them, *Get ye hence*, (*Isa. xxx. 22.*) and all the overflowings of malice, (*πρὸς τὸν κακόν*) which are excessively evil, and are like the luxuriant branches of a tree, which suck away the sap that should make it fruitful; and, having abandoned these, let it be your great concern, that, with all humility, modesty, and submission of your understandings and hearts, consciences and affections to the authority of God in his word, ye may cordially embrace it with faith and love, and it may be set, like a good and fruitful graft, into your very souls, as vitally united with them, and turning all their dispositions and productions into its own holy likeness, which is completely sufficient to shew you the way of salvation; and when received into the heart by faith, and attended with the power of the Spirit, is wonderfully efficacious to nourish your immortal souls with saving virtue, and bring them into a possession of all heavenly happiness, which consists in a deliverance from sin and misery, and in an enjoyment of, and conformity to, the blessed God in all his glory for ever.

22 But

22 But

NOTE

The three directions contained in this verse may very well be considered as general rules of conduct in the ordinary course of our lives and conversation, that we should be more swift to hear than to speak, and should keep a guard upon our passions. But as this verse is an inference from the foregoing discourse; and

as the good and bad use of the tongue, and regulation of the passions, are handled distinctly and at large in *chap. iii.* I rather think that the apostle intended all these exhortations in some such peculiar reference to what he had just before been speaking of, as is suggested in the paraphrase. (*Vid. Zanch. in loc.*)

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth

22 But that it may have this happy effect upon you, see that its influence be so powerful in your hearts, as to engage you to put its excellent and holy principles into practice in your lives; and that ye content not yourselves with barely giving it the hearing, and assenting to it, to fill your heads with notions of the gospel, as if this were all that is necessary to salvation; which would be to delude your own souls by fallacious reasonings, (*παρalogίζονται εαυτους*) and putting the worst of all cheats upon yourselves, in matters of the highest and everlasting consequence.

23 For, let people's pretences be what they will, if any one be only a hearer of the word of God, and do not receive it with faith and love, so as to regulate his dealings with God, and conversation in the world, according to it, he is like a man, (*ανδρς*) who, being ordinarily less curious than women about cleanliness and dress, cursorily looks at the image of his own human face in a mirror or looking-glass; and when he goes away thinks no more of it, nor takes any care to wipe off the spots or dirt upon it. Just so it is with the careless and unprofitable hearer: When he comes to attend on the preaching of the word of God, which may fitly be compared to a looking-glass, as it plainly discovers what a man is in himself, according to the law, and what he may hope to be in Christ according to the gospel, (2 Cor. iii. 18.) he has some notions and convictions of his own guilt, depravity, and danger, and of his need of a Saviour, and of a thorough change in heart and life; but proceeds no further:

24 For, having taken only a slight and transient view of himself, without any deep and abiding impressions upon his heart, he goes away, like the man who beheld his natural face in a glass; and through the cares, or riches, or pleasures, of this life, (*Luke viii. 14.*) immediately lays aside all thoughts or concern about what he saw of his own sin and misery, and want of pardoning and renewing grace, while he sat under the word; and so goes on in impenitence and unbelief, and in a sinful course of life, just as before.

25 But (*ο δε παραυτας*) he who, in opposition to a slight and transient view, (*ver. 23, 24.*) accurately and intently looks into the glass of the gospel-revelation, * which is a complete doctrine of spiritual liberty

C 2
NOTE

* By the perfect law of liberty seems to be meant the doctrine of the gospel, which was spoken of in the preceding context, and in a lax sense of the word is here styled a law, as in *Rom. iii. 27.* (See the note there.) For the *Mosaic*

law, in every view of it, is always represented in the New Testament, as a law of servitude, in opposition to the gospel; and never as a law of liberty. (Vid. *Par. in loc.*)

north *there is*, he being not a forgetful bearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

25 If a man, who is not a forgetful bearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

liberty to true believers, for their deliverance from the ceremonial yoke of bondage, and the servile spirit of the *Mosaic* dispensation, and from the guilt and power of sin, the curse of the law, the wrath of God, and eternal misery, and for their serving him with holy freedom and delight; and he who continues in the faith and practice of the things contained therein, and so is not careless and unmindful of what he heard, or of what he saw himself to be in that glass, but lives in the exercise of every grace, and in the discharge of every duty answerable to it; this man is happy indeed, though not for, yet in his work of faith and labour of love, and in the very keeping of God's commands; (*Pf. xix. 11.*) and as his *fruit is unto holiness, the end shall be everlasting life.* (*Rom. vi. 22.*)

26 Upon the whole then, if any one among you pretends to be a worshipper of God, (*ἱεροπρεπὲς ὄντας*) or makes a great show of religion, and talks abundantly of it, that he may pass for a pious man; and yet, at the same time, do not restrain and govern his tongue, as a furious headstrong horse is checked and curbed by the bridle; but gives himself leave to use profane and abusive language, or to rail against, revile, censure, and reproach his brother, flattering himself with a vain conceit, as though a zeal for God would justify all the injurious and bitter words, which in reality proceed from the pride and passion of his own deceived heart; all this man's religion, whatever he or others may think of it, is an empty insignificant thing, (*ver. 20.*) which will never do him any good, as one that is blessed in his deed. (*ver. 25.*)

27 In opposition to all these false and hypocritical appearances, the religion of the gospel, that is truly sincere and uncorrupted, without mixture of human inventions, or of carnal principles, motives, and ends to defile it, and is exercised, as in the sight and presence of God, even the Father, according to his will and word, with a desire of pleasing him, rather than men; the religion that is approved and accepted of God in Christ, is *this*, it disposes and engages the Christian to be tender, kind, and compassionate to the needy and distressed, especially of the household of faith, (*Gal. vi. 10.*) in doing what he can for their relief and comfort, with all the condescension and friendship that are manifested in readily visiting and assisting poor fatherless children, and destitute widows, who, of all others, need a helping hand; and by its powerful influence upon him, he is enabled to behave in such a circumspect and holy manner, as to keep clear of the pollutions of this evil and ensnaring world, that he may not defile himself, or bring a slur upon his

and more concerned his conscience, hopes, or character, by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life. (1 John. ii. 16.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

Blessed be God! who takes care of his scattered ones, wheresoever they are. Though their tribulations for his name's sake may be great; yet they may rejoice in them, as over-ruled and sanctified for the trial and improvement of their faith and patience, and the perfecting of his good work in them, who shall receive the crown of life, which he has promised to those that love him. What is all this world, which fades and perishes like the flower of the field by the scorching heat of the sun, compared with the exalted and immortal blessings that belong to the humble Christian of the lowest degree? But, O what spiritual wisdom do the children of God need to enable them to behave, as becomes them under their various trials! And what solid grounds have they to alk it in faith! The Father of Lights will give it to them, and not upbraid, but liberally supply perions of all characters and conditions with such good things as they pray for in faith; while others defeat their own prayers, by distrusting his power, faithfulness, and grace, and by fluctuating in religion like a wave of the sea. But if any are drawn into sin and apostacy, by means of the temptations they meet with, how monstrously impious and shocking is it to father their sin upon God, as though he were the cause of it! All good and no moral evil comes from him, who dwells on high; and who, in the mere sovereign pleasure of his own gracious will, forms his people for himself by his regenerating spirit, and the instrumentality of his word, that they may be an excellent kind of creatures to shew forth his praise; and such is the absolute unchangeableness of his holy nature and will, that he can neither be induced to do any iniquity himself, nor to abet or encourage it in others. But whosoever commits sin, it is all owing to the corrupt inclinations of his own heart, which, having once gained the free consent of the will, produces actual sin; and this, persisted in, brings forth its proper wages, in death and ruin; and so he destroys himself.—How watchful should we be against pride and passion, hard thoughts of God, and an assuming temper, that is more ready to speak, than to hear: And with what humility, reverence, and submission to the authority of God in his word, should we receive it; that, by the concurrence of his spirit, it may become an engrafted word to the saving of our souls; and that we may not only be hearers, but hearty believers, and conscientious observers and doers of all that it says to us: Without practical godliness, all a man's thoughts about his own state and condition, that have at any time been presented to his view, in the glass of God's word, are soon forgotten, and leave him just where they found him, impenitent, unbelieving, and unreformed. But he who has a clear and transforming insight, by divine illumination, into the gospel, which is a perfect system of the noblest liberty to true believers, is such a hearer of the word, as is blessed in his way and work, and shall be so at the end of them. O how seriously concerned should we be, not to deceive our own souls in an affair of such vast and eternal consequence! If we are under the dominion of a severely censorious and unruly spirit and tongue, whatever our pretences to religion be, we may depend upon it, that they are all hypocritical, empty, and vain. But if we have that faith, which works by love and compassion to the poor, the destitute widow and fatherless, and which purifies the heart, and fortifies us against the temptations of the world; this is sincere and uncorrupted religion in God's account, and he will own it.

CHAR.

C H A P. II.

The apostle goes on to shew that all notions and professions of faith are vain, if not productive of impartial love and justice to others, the poor as well as the rich, 1,—13. And strongly argues from the nature of things, (illustrated by fruitless pretences of pity to the poor, and by a body without a soul) and from the instances of Abraham and Rahab, the necessity of good works to prove the sincerity of faith, which otherwise is dead, and will be of no more advantage than the faith of devils, 14,—26.

TEXT.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

PARAPHRASE.

THAT your religion, my professing Christian brethren, may prove to be of that kind, which is pure and undefiled, (chap. i. 27.) take heed of entertaining mere notions of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in himself a gloriously divine person, and the purchaser and giver of heavenly glory; and is to be embraced as glorified, after his sufferings and death, by a lively faith in him; and beware of taking up with such empty professions of his glorious name, and presumptuous dependencies on him for eternal life, as leave you under the power of a partial, unjust, and carnal acceptance of persons, (προσωποληψίας) * not according to their religious characters, and the merits of their cause, but according to their higher or lower circumstances in this life.

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man, in vile raiment;

2 For if, at any time, there come into your synagogue, or place of assembling, as for religious worship, so for judging and determining ecclesiastical and civil causes, (see the note on ver. 1.) one man that makes a figure, and is decked with rich and splendid ornaments, such as a gold ring on his finger, and sumptuous raiment; and another comes into the same assembly

NOTE.

* With respect of persons is not to be understood as designed to discountenance paying civil respect, in a decent manner, to persons of superior rank and station, which would be to contradict the apostle Paul's order, (Rom. xiii. 7.) to render honour to whom honour is due, by virtue of their civil character: But it rather relates to partial respects being shewn in civil and ecclesiastical proceedings, merely on account of one person's being richer and finer dressed than another; for in the next verse the apostle speaks of one and the other's coming into the assembly or synagogue, (ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ) which was used for civil and ecclesiastical judicature, as well as for reli-

gious worship; and then he goes on (ver. 3,—9.) to speak of sitting at the footstool, in allusion to the custom of placing persons of lower rank there in their judicatories; and speaks of judges and judgment-seats, and of persons acting partially, as transgressors of the law, which seems to refer to the law about impartial judgment, without respect to the rich or poor, Lev. xix. 15. and Deut. i. 17. (See Dr. Hammond's and Whitby's notes here.) And so this is no way inconsistent with that becoming deference to persons of superior rank and character, which our blessed Lord recommends in common conversation and behaviour, Luke xiv. 8,—10.

assembly or court, that is in mean circumstances, and makes a despicable appearance in a coarse or ragged dress;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

3 And if, in this case, ye shew abundance of respect and deference to him that glitters in fine and gaudy cloaths; and, for that reason only, take great care to ingratiate yourselves with him, and to decide every thing in his favour, and in token thereof invite him to the most honourable seat, saying, Pray, sir, please to take your place here; and at the same time treat the man of low circumstances with scorn, and with a contempt of him and his cause, saying, Stand you at a distance; or, if you would sit, it must be at no better place than my footstool:

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

4 Is not this scandalous difference, which ye make between the rich and the poor, a plain evidence of an unjustifiable partiality in your temper and conduct towards one rather than the other? And do ye not, in reality, pass such a judgment about them severally, as proceeds from carnal, wrong, and biased ways of thinking concerning them, only according to outward appearance?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

5 To guard you against, and cure you of this evil, pray, my dear brethren, whom I trust God loves, consider how contrary this opinion and proceeding of yours is to his thoughts and ways in things that relate to religion and salvation; has not the great and blessed God, in the exceeding riches of his grace, from all eternity chosen (*Eph. i. 4.*) mostly persons of lower circumstances among mankind to faith and holiness here, and to complete salvation hereafter? (*2 Thess. ii. 13.*) And has he not shewn, in the dispensations of his sovereign mercy, that he has peculiarly made choice of such to be partakers of much more excellent riches, through faith in his Son, and through lively exercises of it, than can be found in this world; and to be intitled to, and brought to the possession of an inheritance of all the blessings of that kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter, which he has made over, in the promises of the new covenant, to those that desire, esteem, and delight in him above all creature-enjoyments?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seat?

6 But while ye, on the contrary, have treated your poor Christian brethren with neglect and disregard, ye have dishonoured and poured contempt upon those whom God loves, and has put the highest honour upon, and paid your chief respects to such as he despises, and as ye have no cause to care. For what sort of treatment do ye meet with from them? Is it not the custom of the great and rich men of this world to deal very injuriously by you? Do not the

generality

generality of them, through pride and insolence, and enmity to Christ and his ways, let themselves against you, and (*καταδυναστεύουσιν υμᾶς*) exercise a cruel tyranny over you for his sake; and drag you into courts of judicature to sit in judgment upon you, and to condemn, fine, and imprison you, and put some of your fellow Christians to death, on account of their profession of the gospel?

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

7 Do they not belch out the most horrid reproaches and blasphemies upon that glorious name, on which ye call, and by which ye are denominated Christians, and distinguished as related to Christ? Is it not thus with the great men among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

8 If, instead of paying extravagant honours to men of rank and condition in the world, because of their riches, and despising the poor, because of their poverty, ye were impartially to attend to, and fulfil all the duties of the great law of love; which may be called *the royal law*, as it is a most excellent law, formerly enacted by the king of *Israel* under the Old Testament-dispensation; (*Lev. xix. 18.*) and as Christ, the King of the New Testament church, has established, recommended and enforced it upon all his disciples by new and evangelical motives; (*Matth. xxii. 39.* and *John xiii. 34, 35.*) the purport of which is, You shall treat all your fellow-creatures, and especially your religious brethren, with as much benevolence, justice, and mercy, according to their various circumstances, as you would think right and reasonable, and would expect in like cases to be treated yourself. If, I say, ye thus behave towards all ranks and degrees of mankind, and particularly of your brethren in the Lord, from a principle of love, and in obedience to the command of Christ, your Lord and King, ye act an honourable part (*καλῶς*) becoming your Christian character.

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors.

9 But if, on the other hand, ye make partial distinctions in shewing favourable regards to the rich, rather than the poor, merely on account of their different worldly circumstances, ye therein work iniquity; (*ἀδικεῖτε ἀνθρώπους*) and are convicted, reprov'd, and condemned, as transgressors of that comprehensive and most excellent law of love, (*ver. 8.*) which includes the particular law, that expressly says, *Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: But in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.* (*Lev. xix. 15.*)

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet

10 For admitting, for arguments sake, that any one were exactly to keep all the rest of the precepts of God's law, the sum of which is love; yet if he violates

yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

violates it only in one single instance, he, by just construction, is guilty of a breach, though not of the whole of the law, yet of the whole law, and by its sentence is condemned as such; (*Gal. iii. 10.*) because he as really sins against the authority of the law-giver by one act of disobedience to any of its precepts, as if he had broke them all; and so God is as truly, though not as much, offended by one transgression, as a man is hurt by the injury, that is done to only one member of his body; and the whole system of the law is broke thereby, as a chain is by breaking only one of its links.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery; said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

11 For the same God, who has said in the moral law, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, has also said, *Thou shalt not unjustly kill*, or murder any one whatsoever; both which are contrary to his law of love. Now, if you are not guilty of adultery, or of any uncleanness, in thought, word, or deed; yet if you are guilty of murder in actually committing it, or even in doing, or designing, or desiring to do, what has a tendency to any unlawful way of destroying the life of a fellow-creature, you break in upon the whole of that divine authority, which enacted the law that equally forbids both: And the same holds true with respect to all its other precepts.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

12 Let therefore the whole of your behaviour in disposition, word and deed toward fellow-creatures, as well as toward God, be such as is becoming and right for those to be found in the practice of, that live under the gospel dispensation, and that judge of their brethren, and shall be dealt with in the great day, by, and according to the tenor of the gospel, which is a doctrine according to godliness, (*1 Tim. vi. 3.*) and both obliges to, and, upon principles of faith and love, sets a man's soul at liberty for an impartial and universal obedience to all God's commands, with a noble freedom and delight, far surpassing all that could be obtained by the *Mosaic*-dispensation, from which it has also set him free. (See the note on *chap. i. 25.*)

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

13 For he, whose faith doth not work by love, according to the grace and obligation of the gospel, so as to shew compassion to his poor brethren, shall pass under a severe sentence of condemnation and wrath, to be executed upon him in the day of judgment, without any mixture of that mercy, which is held forth in the doctrine of Christ: And, on the contrary, he who, as the fruit of his faith, exercises tenderness and loving kindness toward them, shall rejoice in his deliverance from condemnation and wrath.

wrath, and against fears of being cast in judgment *; and divine mercy, according to the gospel, shall triumph in his favour, and glory over strict justice according to the law, in the final day of account, agreeable to our Lord's own representation of it. (*Mat. xxv. 34.—46.*)

14. What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?

14. Of what advantage then, my brethren, can it be to any man, if, at the same time, that he talks and boasts of his believing in Christ, and expecting salvation by him, he has no good works springing from his faith, to prove the sincerity of it? Can such a sort of notional faith, and his profession of it, that has no prevailing influence upon him to holiness and obedience, be effectual unto his salvation? No certainly; It is not, in reality, what it pretends to be, as may be illustrated in the following manner.

15. If a brother or sister be naked, and be destitute of daily food;

15. Suppose any Christian brother or sister were all in rags, and had not cloaths sufficient to cover their nakedness, and keep them warm; and at the same time were ready to perish with hunger, through want of necessary food for the present day's subsistence. (*τὸν ἀποκρίνεται πρὸς αὐτοὺς.*)

16. And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

16. And if, in such deplorable circumstances, any of you were to say to them, with an air of pity and concern, Poor distressed creature! Your case is very miserable indeed; I wish you well, and should be glad to hear of some good providence's appearing for your relief; go your way with a satisfied mind, in hope that God will provide necessary raiment to cover you, and food convenient for you: But, though it be in the power of your hands, ye nevertheless give them no manner of assistance that is necessary for them; What signify all these fine words and professions of good wishes? They are all mockery, instead of cordial affection; and can be of no avail either to them, or to your own souls.

17. Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

17. Just so the case stands with respect to *faith*, in God's account, whose judgment is according to truth, if it do not produce spiritual and holy fruits of righteousness to his glory, and the good of others, it is a mere lifeless notion, that has nothing vital or operative in it, as being entirely destitute of every genuine effect, and proper evidence of its sincerity; and it can never be profitable to eternal life, how highly soever any may boast of it, and rely upon it.

18. Yea, a man may

18. Yea, a true believer may fairly expostulate with,

* *Mercy* may here signify the merciful, the abstract being put for the concrete, as the *circumcision* sometimes is for the *circumcised*; or else it may relate

NOTE. If translated, *to the mercy of God*, which shall be extended to the merciful man, instead of his being dealt with, in a way of justice, according to his deserts.

may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

and confound such a vaunting hypocrite, by arguing with him in the following manner: You talk mightily of your faith without giving any proof of its sincerity; and I, on the contrary, instead of taking up with high swelling words and professions of faith, have evangelical works of love and obedience to bear witness that my faith has its proper influence upon me. Now, if your faith is of the right sort, shew it to be so by your practice answerable to it, which I challenge you to do; and I, in like manner, will give the same proof of mine, even beyond all that you can produce of that kind*. Or else demonstrate to me, that your faith is good and effectual, if you can, (which is indeed impossible) without any suitable works to support your confident boastings of it: And I will take a better course for making it plain to you, that my faith is vital and efficacious, by its producing works of holiness in my life; and so, in a just and scriptural way of reasoning, I will substantially prove the cause by its effects, as the nature of a tree is known by its fruits. (*Matth. vii. 16,—20.*)

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble.

19 If you insist that you have true faith in a fundamental doctrine of all real religion, because you believe that there is a God, in opposition to atheists; and that there is but one living and true God, in opposition to heathen idolaters; thus far it must be owned that you are in the right, and bear an honourable testimony to the Deity. (*καλως νομεις*) But if you rest in a bare assent to this important point, it will be of no avail to your salvation: For the very demons themselves, those wicked spirits that are consigned over to everlasting destruction, believe this as well as you; not one of them all can deny it; and they tremble at the thought of his power and justice, which, perhaps, is more than you do: But if you have no better faith than this, you have reason to be afraid, and must one day tremble before his terrible Majesty, as much as they.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that

20 But, O foolish empty professor of religion, (*κακως*) you who take up with such a bare persuasion, as has no practical influence upon your life and conversation,

D 2

and

NOTE.

* The paraphrase on this verse takes in both the marginal and textual reading in our translation. According to the marginal reading by thy works, which is supported by several good copies, (*Vid. Mill. in loc.*) it may be considered as the true believer's challenge of the boasting professor to produce that evidence, which hitherto had not appeared; and engaging to join issues with him on that

foot. But according to the textual reading without thy works, which seems most agreeable to the nature of the argument, it may be understood as a suggestion of the impossibility of proving the truth of faith without good works, as its fruits; and of the advantage that he has, in point of evidence, who can demonstrate the cause by its effects.

that faith without works is dead?

that faith without works is dead?

that faith without works is dead?

20 Was not Abraham, our father justified, by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

and yet flatter yourself that all is safe and well, Will you not consider, nor lay to heart, that, whatever your pretences and professions be, a mere doctrinal faith, without some correspondent works, as its product, to prove that it is of the right kind, is, as has been observed, (*ver. 17.*) a dead worthless name and form, which has no life or activity in it; nor can be effectual to any saving advantage? Let me illustrate this in an example or two.

21 Was not Abraham, the father of the faithful, from whom we Jews are descended, and in whom the carnal *Israelites* amongst us boast, as though their relation to him would secure their happiness? Was not he himself proved to be a sincere believer, * and

NOTE

* It is evident to me, that Abraham's being justified by works could not relate to the justification of his person before God; because in that sense he was justified long before upon his first believing, even before he was circumcised, *Rom. iv. 10. 11.*; nor could it relate to what some call the *secondary* justification; for this, according to them, depended upon his finally persevering in good works, whereas the works here specified were performed several years before his death: Nor can the other instance of Rahab's being justified by works (*ver. 25.*) relate to her own *personal* justification, with regard to her *spiritual* state: For there is not the least appearance, that this faith of her's was for justification to eternal life; or that it had any reference to Christ, or to the types, prophecies, or promises of him, who was the object to be believed in for a spiritual and eternal salvation; and her works were only the fruit of that faith which she had relating to temporal salvation, and so proved that she really did believe that the Lord had given Israel the land in which she dwelt, and that he is God in heaven above and in earth below; and this faith operated so strongly in her, as to put her upon making terms for her own and family's safety, from the destruction that was coming upon Jericho. (See *Josh. ii. 8. — 13.*) And the author to the Hebrews takes no notice of her justification, but only says, with a reference to the destruction of that city, By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. (*Heb. xi. 31.* see the note there.) But there was nothing of justifying faith in all this; no, nor in that other instance, which our

apostle alledged (*ver. 19.*) of him that believes there is one God, which the devil also believe and tremble. These observations seem to lead us to an easier solution, than I have met with, of the difficulties that have been raised about reconciling this and the following verses, which speak of a man's being justified by works, and not by faith only, with the apostle Paul's doctrine of justification alone by faith without works, which he so much insisted on, *Rom. iii. 28.* and *iv. 1. — 6.* and *Gal. ii. 16.* and in several other places: For it appears by the instances which the apostle James here argues upon, that, except in the case of Abraham, it is not, so much at least, about justification by Christ, through faith in him, as about the justification of the truth and sincerity of faith in God and in his promises; which he shews to be dead, and altogether unprofitable, unless it be proved to be genuine by its practical influence upon the heart and life to all holy obedience; and so he speaks of justifying a man's faith, or his character, as a sincere believer, to free him from the charge of hypocrisy; and not of the justification of his person, to acquit him from a charge of guilt, and from law-condemnation, as to his state before God, which the apostle Paul so often affirms to be by faith without works. There is therefore no real contradiction between these two apostles; since it is a quite different sort of faith, and of justification, which they respectively speak of, and that with a view to different sorts of persons. The apostle James, to confute licentious solitudinians, shews that all notions and professions, even of faith in God, without good works to justify its sincerity, are vain; and the apostle

21. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works faith made perfect?

23. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the friend of God.

24. Ye see then how that by works

fo his faith justified, or demonstrated to be effectual, by his eminent works of obedience, when, at God's command, he fully determined, and actually attempted, as far as God permitted him, to offer up *Isaac*, his beloved and only son of the promise, upon the altar which he had prepared for that purpose? (*Gen. xxii. 1, — 12.*)

22. Do not you hereby plainly see, how effectually his faith operated in producing these remarkably eminent works of unreserved subjection and obedience to God; and how, by performing those works, his faith was manifested to be completely true and right faith, that had no defect in any thing essentially belonging to it?

23. And as this was an undeniable proof of the reality and power of his faith, that passage of Scripture was hereby evidently shewn to be fulfilled, (see the note on *ver. 21.*) which spake of him long before, saying, (*Gen. xv. 6.*) *Abraham believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness*, that is, He believed in the promise of God, that the Messiah should be one of his seed; and what he believed concerning him, and in him for, was graciously accepted, and placed to his account, for righteousness to eternal life. (See the note on *Rom. iv. 3.*) And upon the proof he gave of the truth of this faith in offering up his Son, from whom the promised Messiah was to come, as believing *that God was able to raise him up even from the dead*, (*Heb. xi. 19.*) The Lord spake with high approbation of this signal evidence of his faith, saying, after the manner of men, *Now I know that thou fearest God; seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son:* (*Gen. xxii. 12.*) And he was afterwards called *the friend of God*, (*2 Chron. xx. 7.* and *Isa. xli. 8.*) as one in covenant with him, (which was solemnly renewed and ratified, with an addition of more explicit promises, on this occasion, *Gen. xxii. 16, — 18.*) and as one, that had manifested the most dutiful and affectionate obedience to his command, and was owned as his peculiar favourite, and taken into the nearest communion with him, as his friend.

24. Ye therefore may plainly discern from hence, that a true believer's character is justified against a charge

NOTE.

apostle Paul, to confute those *self-justifiers* that were for depending on their own works, as the ground of their acceptance with God to eternal life, shews that *justification in his sight* is only by faith in Christ and his righteousness,

without any mixture of works, as ingredients into it; though it be not by such a faith in him, as is not productive of good works, they being inseparable from all *saving faith of the operation of God*.

a man is justified, and not by faith only.

25 Likewise also,

was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way.

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

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charge of hypocrisy, or of empty speculation and profession, by the good works he produces, as the fruit of his faith, and not by mere pretences to faith, which is dead, as being alone, without suitable works. (ver. 17.)

25 I would also instance in another person, even a *Gentile*, whose faith was not so strong as *Abraham's*; Was not the character of *Rahab* the harlot, who dwelt at *Jericho*, justified by her works, which unquestionably shewed that she firmly believed God would certainly deliver that city up to *Israel*, (see the notes on ver. 21. and *Heb. xi. 31.*) when, upon that faith, she kindly entertained the messengers, which *Joshua* sent to spy out the land, and directed them to make their escape in a way that might prevent their falling into the hands of their enemies, who sought to kill them; and engaged the spies to shew kindness to her and her father's house, and save them alive? (*Josh. ii. 1.—16.*) By these examples you plainly see how necessary works of obedience are to demonstrate the sincerity of any one's faith in every case whatsoever.

26 For it appears from all this, that as the human body without breath, or without a soul to animate it, is a loathsome dead carcase, very offensive, and utterly incapable of discharging any functions of this life; so all that sort of faith that is not efficacious for bringing forth good works, which are the inseparable effects and tokens of a living faith, really is, and shews itself to be, entirely dead and detestable in a spiritual sense.

RECollections.

How natural is it for carnal minds to judge according to outward appearance! And to be influenced by the gay dress and splendid ornaments of the rich, to give them an unjustifiable preference; and by the mean apparel of the poor, to use them with contempt and scorn, whatever their respective religious characters be! Surely, this sort of partiality proceeds from a very corrupt bias of the heart. But how unsuitable is this to the temper and behaviour of true believers in Jesus Christ! The professors of his name ought to consider, that God has mostly chosen the poor of this world to faith and all its riches here, and to the inheritance of his heavenly kingdom hereafter, which he has promised, without respect of persons on external accounts, to all that heartily love him; and the poor among them, as much as the rich, are members of the Lord of Glory. They should likewise recollect, that wickedness, oppression, and blasphemous reproaches on the blessed name of Christ, by which it is their honour to be called, chiefly reign among persons of rank and figure in the world; and that, though decent respect is to be paid to all, according to their civil stations; yet favouring the rich rather than the poor, in religious affairs, or in matters of right and wrong, is exceeding sinful. It is a transgression of the moral law, by a breach of which, were it only in one point, a man becomes guilty of breaking its whole system, and as really affronts the whole of its divine authority, which equally enjoins obedience to every one of its precepts, as if he had broke them all; and it is a direct violation of that noble comprehensive law, which requires us to love our neighbours as ourselves; yea, is utterly contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel of the grace of God, which may be called the law of liberty,

liberty, but leaves no room for any to expect favour and mercy in the judgment of the great day, who are not constrained by its endearments to shew love and mercy to the poor, especially of the household of faith. What signify fine words of pity and compassion, and empty wishes of all needful supplies to hungry and naked Christians, without doing any thing, according to our opportunities and abilities, for their relief? They are all mere pretences and hypocrisy. And must we not, with equal truth, pronounce that all notions and professions of *faith*, unless it be productive of, and evidenced by good works, is a vain and dead *faith*? It can never be proved to be otherwise. Though *Abraham's* and *Rahab's* works did not justify their persons before God, yet they justified their faith, and shewed it to be true and genuine before men, as it was apparently practical in them severally; but a bare assent of the mind, without holy effects on the heart and life, is no better than the faith of devils, who believe there is one God, and tremble for fear of him, as all mere notionalists in religion one day will. Upon the whole then, it must be concluded that faith without works is as dead and offensive to God, as any human carcass, that has no soul to enliven and actuate it, can be to us. And he is a vain man indeed, who imagines that such a faith can save him.

C H A P. III.

The apostle cautions against an arrogant assuming temper and behaviour, and against the mischief of an unsanctified and unruly tongue, 1,—13. and shews the excellency of heavenly wisdom, which discovers itself in purity, meekness, and peace, in opposition to that which is litigious, carnal, and worldly, 14,—18.

TEXT.

MY brethren be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

PARAPHRASE.

TAKE heed, my Christian brethren, lest many of you affect to be (*διδασκαλοι*) teachers of others without sufficient qualifications for it; and much more, lest they give way, like the *Jewish* doctors, to a magisterial and censorious temper in matters of religion; as being fully convinced that the more any of us indulge and act according to it, the greater will be our sin, and the more severe our sentence of condemnation at the last day. (*Mat. vii. 1,—5.*)

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

2 For it must be owned that all, even the best of us, are daily guilty of many slips and falls, that are transgressions of both tables of God's holy law, offensive to him and to our fellow-creatures, which should make us very humble and modest in our thoughts of ourselves, and sparing in our censures of others. But if any one, like *David*, (*Ps. xxxix. 1.*) is enabled to keep a bridle upon his tongue, that it utter no opprobrious, false, or other sinful words, from a predominance of any corrupt or excessive passion; (see *chap. i. 21, 26.*) he is a sincere believer and finished Christian; (see the note on *1 Cor. ii. 6.*) is a man of rich attainments in knowledge and experience, integrity and holiness; and is furnished with such divine assistances, as are sufficient to curb all the irregularities of his conduct, and to spread an amiable influence through all the members of his body, and the whole behaviour

Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue amongst our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

7 And an unruly, furious, and abusive tongue is really one of the worst of fires: It vents a great deal of sin; is the outlet of the whole source of wickedness that lies in a man's heart; (*Matt. xv. 18.*) and is the cause of abundance of iniquity among others; such a mischievous and destructive member is this little one amidst the other members of our bodies, that, by its exorbitant licentiousness, it spreads guilt and defilement through the whole man, and kindles such wrath and anger in our own and other people's passions, as throw the whole course of the moral world into a pernicious ferment, which runs through (the whole circle of every generation, and the whole rotation of life, from youth to old age: And as all this evil is of a hellish nature, and is kindled and blown up by the diabolical influence of the accuser of the brethren, and father of lies; so the tongue, together with the man who lays no restraint upon it, will at length be tormented in the unquenchable flames of hell fire, (*Luke xvi. 24.*) and

behaviour of his life, to the advantage of every religious and civil body that he is related to.

3 To illustrate the benefit of a due government of the tongue, observe how we deal with the horses we ride upon. We do not let them run at random, but bridle them with bits in their mouths, to check, and restrain their mettlesome fallies, and direct their course that they may move according to our pleasure; and by this means we turn their whole bodies to the right or the left, and into one and another road, just as we think proper.

4 Observe also how men use to manage the largest ships at sea in sailing; which though they are such huge vessels, and sometimes tossed about and driven out of their course by contrary and tempestuous winds, are nevertheless turned about and directed into their due bearings again, by so very small an instrument as the rudder, which way soever he at the helm is minded to steer them.

5 In like manner, a man's tongue is indeed a very small member, in comparison with the whole bulk of his body; and as it is of great use, when properly managed, under the influence of divine grace, for directing the whole series of life; so, if it be left under the power and conduct of an un sanctified carnal heart, it talks at an extravagant rate with all the airs of haughtiness and contempt of others. And pray take notice how, by injurious language, it, like a spark of fire in the midst of combustible matter, kindles a terrible flame of contention and confusion all around it.

6 And an unruly, furious, and abusive tongue is really one of the worst of fires: It vents a great deal of sin; is the outlet of the whole source of wickedness that lies in a man's heart; (*Matt. xv. 18.*) and is the cause of abundance of iniquity among others; such a mischievous and destructive member is this little one amidst the other members of our bodies, that, by its exorbitant licentiousness, it spreads guilt and defilement through the whole man, and kindles such wrath and anger in our own and other people's passions, as throw the whole course of the moral world into a pernicious ferment, which runs through (the whole circle of every generation, and the whole rotation of life, from youth to old age: And as all this evil is of a hellish nature, and is kindled and blown up by the diabolical influence of the accuser of the brethren, and father of lies; so the tongue, together with the man who lays no restraint upon it, will at length be tormented in the unquenchable flames of hell fire, (*Luke xvi. 24.*) and

that most justly, since such a violent tongue is more refractory and unmanageable, than the wildest and fiercest of all the lower ranks of creatures.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

7 For all sorts of savage beasts and wild fowls, and creeping animals, (*terrestrial*) even venomous serpents, and voracious fishes and monsters of the sea, (*aquatic*) are by human labour and art subdued and kept within bounds, and have been brought under confinement and restraint, and mastered by mankind, who still retain something of the original grant of dominion over them. (*Gen. i. 26.*)

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

8 But when any one's tongue launches out in revilings, falsehoods, and other malignant speeches, under the power of strong, furious, and vile passions, it is more untractable than all these; no man upon earth can master it by his own power and skill; nor can any other man gain an entire conquest over it: It is a most ungovernably evil instrument, spitting out the venom of pride, malice, envy, reproach, and falsehood, and all sorts of wickedness, which are as destructive to a man's own soul, and to the welfare of society, as the most mortal poison is to the body: *The poison of asps*, the most desperate of all others, *is under such a man's lips.* (*Rom. iii. 13.*)

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

9 An unsanctified tongue runs so much at random, that some of us, who as men, and much more as professing Christians, ought, like *David*, to count it our glory, (*Ps. xxx. 12.*) and to employ it in celebrating the praises of the Lord, use it, one while, for speaking honourably of God, praying to him, and offering up thanksgivings and praises in public and private, even to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all believers in him, the Father of Mercies, and the Author of our beings and of all our enjoyments; and, at another time, we abuse it, pouring out revilings and horrid imprecations and curses upon our fellow-creatures, for whom we ought to have a reverence, as they were originally created after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, and are still formed after his likeness in the natural faculties of their rational souls, and in their dominion over the creature; and are renewed according to his holy image by regenerating grace.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

10 So that out of one and the same mouth come forth blessings and praises in one mood, and curses in another. Certainly, my Christian brethren, these contrary uses of the same tongue are monstrously incongruous and absurd; and ought, by no means, to have any place in those who make a profession of Christ and his gospel.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

11 They are as utterly inconsistent with true religion and godliness, as it would be to suppose that streams of contrary qualities proceed from the same opening of one fountain. Did ye ever know? Or is it possible, in the nature of things, that one and the same spring could gush out at the same place, and flow abroad in streams of water, some of which are quite fresh, and agreeable to the palate, and others entirely brackish and distasteful?

12 Or can a fig tree, my brethren, produce the fruit which grows only upon olive trees? Or was it ever known, that a grape vine brought forth figs? Why, full as inconsistent is it to suppose that a man's heart, the fountain from whence all his words proceed, should freely and habitually vent itself in ways of talking, that are of as directly contrary a nature, as the salt water of the sea, and the sweet water of the finest spring are one to the other.

13 Who is there then among you, that would approve himself to be wise toward God, and for himself and others; prudent in his conduct; and endued with the true knowledge of God, of Christ, and of himself; and with a spiritual discerning of the absurdity and self-contradiction of these things? Let it be his great care and concern, that, by an honourable deportment in the church and in the world, he may evidently practise all manner of good works, in the whole course of his conversation, with a meek and humble spirit, which proceeds from, and discovers the truest wisdom.

14 But if, instead of such a laudable temper and behaviour, ye give a loose to your sinful passions; and your hearts are full of envious, quarrelsome and contentious dispositions and designs, which are a bitter torment to your own souls, and, when breaking out in words, are grievously stinging and wounding to others: Never be fond or boast of such a malignant temper, that is so directly contrary to the meek and humble spirit of the gospel; nor dare to conceive, or utter any falsehood to put a fine gloss upon it; nor make any hypocritical pretences to sincerity or prudence in such a course of life.

15 Whatever any may think of it, let me tell you, that this sort of pretended wisdom does not come from heaven, nor is God the author of it; but it proceeds entirely from an excess of earthly and sensual propensions to the things of this world, which unregenerate men are under the power of; and is excited by the devil himself, bears his image, pleases him, and promotes his interests and designs for doing mischief.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

16 For wherever an envious, censorious, and litigious spirit is indulged, and breaks forth from the heart through the lips, its natural tendency, and ordinary effect, is nothing but disturbance and destruction to the peace and happiness of a man's own soul, and of all about him, together with every other kind of iniquity and calamity.

17 But the wisdom that is heavenly and divine, as *coming down from the Father of Lights*, (chap. i. 17.) and tending to heavenly happiness, is just the reverse of all this: It has, in the first place, a strict regard to purity of doctrine and manners in heart, speech, and behaviour; and then, as far as is consistent with truth and holiness, it studies the things that make for peace; and in order thereunto, it disposes the soul to be mild and courteous in its treatment of others, and *in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves*; (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.) and to be easily persuaded to all that is good, to be open to conviction, and attend to all reasonable considerations for condescension and forbearance; it also abounds in acts of kindness and compassion to the poor and afflicted, and in every other fruit of righteousness; together with a generosity that has no respect of persons, and that lays aside all severity and partiality in judging and condemning others; and with a sincerity that is free from dissimulation. (Rom. xii. 9.)

18 And the principle, productive of this righteous behaviour, is sown, like good seed, in the peace of a believer's own mind, and of his Christian brethren, and of the world all around him, as in a fertile soil; and shall be reaped in a plentiful harvest of prosperity here, and for ever hereafter, by those, who, in a way of spiritual wisdom, are disposed unto, and lay themselves out in promoting, such a pure and holy peace.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What cause have we to be modest and humble, instead of indulging an arrogant and censorious temper towards our Christian brethren, while we consider, in how many things we all offend against God and them! And what an aggravation would inobedience of our *own* and severity on *others* faults be, of self-condemnation at the great day! How important is a due government of the tongue! He that obtains help from God to rule his own tongue, is a great proficient in religion, and well qualified for ordering his whole conversation aright. Though the most mettlesome horses are governed by a bit and bridle, and the largest ships, when driven by contrary and boisterous winds, are reduced to their proper course by a small rudder; and though the most wild and savage animals of the earth, air, and sea, may be, and have been brought into subjection by human art; yet no man of himself can get such a mastery over his tongue, as thoroughly to bridle its excess; nor can any other man effectually cure its malignity. Though it be but a little member, and, if well managed, is of great use; yet when it flies out into bitter expressions, it is an unruly evil, and is like a spark of fire, that sets abundance of combustible matter into a flame. It is indeed the worst of fire, that spreads confusion, defilement,

and destruction through the whole man, and amongst all around him; derives its original from hell; and is in danger of everlasting fire, without one drop of water to cool it. But O how monstrously absurd, and inconsistent is it for the same mouth to utter the praises of God, and horrid imprecations upon men that are formed after his image! This is as directly contrary to the Christian character, as it would be to suppose that one and the same fountain can send forth sweet and bitter, fresh and salt water at the same opening; or that a fig-tree can bear olives, or a vine figs. If therefore the heart and tongue are full of envy, animosity, and angry contentions, we ought to be ashamed, instead of glorying in them. For if any, that boast of their wisdom, give way to these pernicious evils, it is all a false pretence; it is only the wisdom of the flesh, which proceeds from earthly and sensual passions and appetites, and is propagated by the devil himself after his own likeness. But he who, with a meek and humble spirit, walks honourably, as becomes the gospel of Christ, is endued with the most excellent wisdom and spiritual understanding. This man's wisdom has its original from heaven, and shall issue in heavenly happiness; it has a strict regard to purity in principle and practice; and then, in full consistency with this, it studies the things that make for peace, with all affability, and persuadableness to every thing that is right; and abounds in compassion to the afflicted, and in all beneficence, as occasions require, without any partial respect of persons, or hypocritical pretences to more than we really mean. And O the blessed fruit of such a wife and holy deportment! They, who thus study and endeavour to promote this excellent sort of prosperity and peace, are therein sowing seed, which will spring up to their own comfort here, and everlasting joy hereafter.

C H A P. IV.

The apostle cautions against corrupt affections, as the root of wars and quarrels, and the bane of prayer; and against an inordinate love of this world, as enmity with God, who gives grace to the humble, 1,—6. Directs proud and carnal professors to submit and betake themselves to God, and resist the devil, and to abandon and lament their sinful courses, in order to their being exalted, 7,—10. and exhorts all professing Christians to speak candidly one of another, and to undertake no affairs of life without a constant regard to the will and providence of God, 11,—17.

TEXT.

FROM whence
come wars and
fightings among
you? come they
not hence. even of
your lusts, that
war in your mem-
bers?

PARAPHRASE.

AS I would fain excite you to a just abhorrence of the evils that lie in opposition to the peace but now recommended, (*chap. iii. 18.*) Let me ask you, and leave the answer to your own consciences, What is it that gives rise to, and foment the dreadful contentions, animosities and broils, that have spread so much misery and confusion among mankind, and professing Christians, as they have among you of the Jewish nation? * Does not the root and source of them

NOTE.

* Some have thought that the apostle here refers to the seditions, tumults, and wars that raged about this time among the Jews in their quarrels one with another, and rebellions against the Romans, to throw off their yoke, and obtain to

themselves that temporal dominion, which they vainly imagined they had a divine right to; and that some Jewish Christians joined therein from their carnal notions of the Messiah, as though he were to set up a temporal kingdom among

them all lie in your corrupt affections, such as pride, envy, covetousness, and an immoderate thirst after dominion over others, or after the riches, honours, or pleasures of this world, each of which intemperate appetites contend for the mastery in all the powers of your souls, and over all the members of your bodies, (see the note on *Rom. vii. 5.*) and all together war against them, to their defilement, injury, and ruin, and against the dictates of reason, religion, and conscience, and even against the Spirit of God himself in his holy operations?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

2 Ye inordinately desire and pursue a gratification of your guilty passions; and cannot compass your criminal designs: Ye are ready to devour one another; and have an envious reach (*ζηλῶσι*) after the possessions of others; and are not able (*σπουδῶσι*) to gain the advantages, which ye so greedily covet; much less can ye find your happiness in them: Ye still continue to strive and contend furiously for victory, wealth, and grandeur; and yet fail of obtaining your own ends, and so meet with perpetual disappointments, because ye do not seriously ask counsel of God to direct your way, as to what ye ought to do, and to succeed your attempts, as far as they may be agreeable to his will.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

3 Or, if at any time ye pray for prosperity in your affairs, your prayers are not answered; because your principles, motives, and ends, in asking the things you would have, are all wrong; not, as they ought to be, that ye may use them for the glory of God, and your own and others real good, but that ye may riot upon them, and spend them in a profuse indulgence to your own vanity, ambition, and luxury, which is very offensive to God.

4 Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

4 Whosoever ye be, whether of the male, or female sex, that under a religious character, as God's covenant-people, have such eager appetites after the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, as alienate your hearts from him, ye are guilty of no less sin than spiritual adultery, in admitting a competitor with him, to whom ye are visibly betrothed, as your spiritual husband. Do you not understand and consider so plain a point as this, that an excessive fondness for the great and good things of this world, and a conformity to worldly-minded men, in following their

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mong his disciples, and make them lords of the universe.—But as the national wars were in *Judea*, and are supposed to have been after the time of writing this epistle, we may rather understand the apostle to speak of contentions and quar-

rels in general, which on various occasions prevailed among the Jewish professors of Christianity; and, alas! have sadly broke out among other professors of it, all along, in public and private life, to this very day.

their sinful courses to ingratiate yourselves with them, and to obtain those things, stand in direct opposition to the holy nature and will of God, and are utterly inconsistent with that supreme love and affection, which ye owe to him? (1 John ii. 15, 16.) Whoever therefore is so attached to the things of this world, as to place his chief happiness in them, and will court the friendship of the men of this world, at any rate, to procure them, is in heart an enemy to, instead of a friend and lover of God, and takes the part of his adversaries, instead of siding with him.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain; The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

5 Are ye so vain as to suppose, that those scriptures of the Old Testament stand on record to no good purpose, or are not worth regarding, which strongly remonstrate, in many passages, against pride, envy, covetousness, and the like, and which give us such a view of the corruption of human nature, as shews that the temper, which abides and powerfully works in us, 'till we are renewed by grace, is so impetuous and ambitious in its pursuits after earthly things, as to carry the soul into envious thoughts of those that have more of them, than we have ourselves *? Or, on the contrary, do ye vainly imagine, that the Spirit of God which dwells in us, who are true believers, excites such a carnal worldly disposition in us? No, this cannot be the nature, tendency, or design of his holy influence upon us.

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

6 But, on the contrary, in whomsoever the Spirit dwells, he, or God by him, gives them such a gracious impression as tends to humility, self-denial, love, and all goodness; and gives a greater abundance of it, than to leave them under the power of any corrupt affections. Therefore, to encourage their hopes and prayers for all needful assistances, he speaks in his holy word, (Ps. xviii. 27. and Prov. iii. 34. and xxix. 23.) as our blessed Lord himself also doth, (Mat. xxiii. 12. and Luke xviii. 14.) to this effect, God sets himself, as it were in battle array, (*avertit oculos*) with indignation

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* By the spirit that dwells in us some understand the corrupt disposition, which is naturally in our hearts; and others, the Spirit of God, who is often said to dwell in true believers. If we take it in the first sense, the whole verse is to be considered as one question; or if we would take it in the last, it must be divided into two, as in the paraphrase; one or other of which appears to be the most probable sense among the numerous obscure interpretations that have been given of this verse, a very large collection of which is made by *Estius*, *Paræus*,

and others. And if the last of these interpretations be admitted, which is supported by criticisms in *Glassius*, and Dr. *Whitby*, then the relative *he*, at the beginning of the next verse, refers to the Spirit, or to God, ver. 4. as working by him. But which ever of these ways we go into for explaining the words, what the scripture says seems not to refer to any particular passage, but to the doctrine of the Old Testament, as that may be gathered from many places, which are recited by *Paræus*.

indignation and disdain, against those that are ambitious and haughty, self-conceited and self-sufficient, as placing their confidence and happiness in the things of this life, or in their own wisdom, or strength, or deserts; he drives them away from his gracious presence, who thus set themselves against him; and defeats their aims at honour and esteem among men. But he extends his favour to, and bestows his special grace, with growing strength and vigour, upon the lowly in heart, who have such humbling thoughts of themselves, and of the emptiness and vanity of all creature-enjoyments, as to place their hope and happiness entirely in him. (See *Prov. iii. 34.*) So that to those, to whom he has given the grace of *humility*, he gives still more grace of every kind, according to their wants and desires; and exalts them in his favour, and in the eyes of all good men. (*ver. 10.*)

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

7 In humble dependence therefore on his free favour and gracious influence, yield yourselves up, with an obediential and unreserved subjection, to the guidance and disposals, authority and will of God, as manifested by his word and providence; and be contented with such things as ye have. Whatever Satan may suggest against this; or whatever attempts he may make by his subtle devices, or fiery darts, to dishearten you in, or draw you off from, the way of duty, give no place to him; (*Eph. iv. 27.*) but *be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand, and resist him stedfastly in the faith*; (*Eph. vi. 10, 11, 13.* and *1 Pet. v. 9.*) and he will flee from you, like a vanquished enemy that dares no longer to encounter you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts ye double minded.

8 And as ever ye would effectually maintain your ground, prevail against him, and get rid of all his temptations, Be earnest and importunate in humble and fiducial approaches to God, through Christ, on a throne of grace, in a way of *duty*, and he will certainly come near to you in a way of *mercy* and *faithfulness*, for your direction, relief, and comfort, according to his promise. (*Jer. xxix. 13.*) And whereas some among you have, through the suggestions of Satan and your own evil hearts, become grievous sinners before God, see that you wash your hands in innocence, and so compass the altar of the Lord, (*Pf. xxvi. 6.*) lifting up *holy hands* in your prayers, *without wrath and doubting*; (*1 Tim. ii. 8.*) and remember that *if ye regard iniquity in your hearts, the Lord will not bear you*. (*Pf. lxi. 18.*) Beg of him therefore to enable you to cleanse your hands from violence and blood, extortion and bribes, and every other sin; with which they have been

being defiled; and to purge your hearts from pride, covetousness, envy, and the whole source of iniquity, which work within you, that ye may abhor, renounce, and utterly depart from them; and may be so thoroughly reformed in heart and life, as to be-

have no longer like double-minded professors, whose thoughts and services are divided between God and the world. (*Chap. i. 8. see the paraphrase there.*)

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

9 In serious reflection upon all your abominations, let your souls be deeply impressed with penitential sorrow, as those that sincerely and bitterly lament, and weep over them, and for the miseries they have brought upon you, or exposed you to: Let all your jollity, mirth, and gaiety, which ye have shamefully indulged in gratifying your sensual appetites, be turned into ingenuous and evangelical mournings; and all your carnal pleasure into a religious grief and sadness of heart, on account of your provocations, and for fear of God's judgments.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

10 In this manner, lay yourselves at the foot of God with the lowest prostration and self-abasement, as offenders of his sacred Majesty, and with an affecting conviction that he knows your hearts and principally looks at them, and observes all the secret workings of corruption, on one hand, and of contrite sorrow on the other, that pass within them: And he, in his own time and way, will revive your drooping souls with a sense of his pardoning, and with recovering grace; will raise you up above all your fears and troubles, temporal and spiritual; and will exalt you to honour among his people in this world, and to immortal glory in the world to come.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

11 But to return to the vices of the tongue, (*chap. iii. 5, &c.*) Be very cautious, my brethren in the Lord, of censuring and reviling one another, or of aggravating and needlessly exposing each other's faults; and much more of raising and propagating false reports to the prejudice of fellow Christians: For he that slanders his Christian brother, to whom, as such, he ought to be most kindly affectionate, and that takes upon himself rashly to judge and condemn him, without any just cause, or for things which are lawful to him, reproaches the law of God itself; and practically arraigns and condemns the wisdom, equity, holiness and goodness, both of the law, which allows of the things he condemns, and of the law, which requires him to *love his neighbour as himself*, (*chap. ii. 8.*) and forbids his *going up and down as a tale-bearer among his people*, (*Lev. xix. 16.*) and *rashly judging others, lest he himself be judged*, (*Matth. vii. 1.*) But if any of you pretend to set up

for censors of the law itself, you do not act the part of a subject in obeying its commands, but assume to yourself the authority of a judge, which do not belong to you.

12 There is one law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?

12. To convince you of the evil of this, consider that there is only one Author and Giver of the law, and none but he has authority to enact and execute it, relating to religion and conscience: He therefore has the sole right of being the Lord and Judge of his own law; and he alone is able to distribute its rewards to the wrongfully accused, in a temporal and eternal salvation; and its punishments to uncharitable condemners, in present and everlasting destruction. Who then are you, a poor, vain, weak, and fallible, yea, sinful creature, that you should take upon you to judge and condemn any one, who is accountable only to his own Lord and Master, and must be saved, or lost for ever, according to the sentence he shall pass upon him? (*Rom. xiv. 4.*)

13 Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain:

13 Let me now a little expostulate with those of you that are so worldly-minded, and so thoughtless of God and his providence, as to promise yourselves long life and prosperity upon earth, and say, with a peremptory air of self-sufficiency and Independent confidence, We will go to-day or to-morrow, or whenever we please, to this or the other trading city; and there we will stay a considerable time, and (if need be) for a whole year together, and pursue our traffic or merchandise in buying and selling various sorts of goods, and so enrich ourselves by our own wisdom, care, and diligence.

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

14 This is all presumptuous, irreligious, not to say atheistical language, in the hearts or mouths of such frail mortals as ye are, who, together with all your affairs, are in a precarious situation, ever liable to numberless disappointments, and entirely dependent on the sovereign will and providence of God, and know not what a day may bring forth, what turn your circumstances may take, or whether ye yourselves shall be in the land of the living another day: For, pray consider, what is your life itself, that ye should talk with such confident assurance of what ye will do for time to come? Ye have no security for any, the least, continuance of it, which may suddenly and unawares be cut off; much less can ye be sure of opportunity and ability to compass your designs, one day or moment beyond the present. Your breath is in your nostrils, and your life, with all that depends upon it relating to this world, may well be compared to a fleeting vapour, which rises from the earth or from water, and is visible for a little while,

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin.

and then is immediately scattered and lost in the atmosphere, and is seen no more.

15 A contrary way of thinking and speaking therefore becomes you; and whatever schemes or projects ye have formed, and would pursue, it ought always to be with this humble and necessary proviso, If it shall please God to favour our views, we shall continue in life for discharging the duties of our stations; and then, in a dependence on his guidance, assistance, and blessing, we intend to transact this and the other business, which, by his will, we may have opportunity and ability to engage in; still leaving events with him, *who is our life, and the length of our days; in whose hand is our breath, and whose are all our ways.* (Deut. xxx. 20. and Dan. v. 23.)

16 But now, instead of talking in this humble creaturely and Christian-like strain, which is so honourable to God, and suitable to your state of unworthiness, and of entire dependence upon him for *life and breath, and all things,* (Acts xvii. 25.) Those of you that leave him out of your thoughts, and of your secular employments, in the manner but now mentioned, glory in your own sufficiency, which ye speak of with a boasting air of self-confidence. Alas! all such sort of glorying is very shameful; it is abominable and foolish, injurious to yourselves, and a bad example to others; and is exceeding sinful and affrontive to God, *whose kingdom rules over all:* (Psal. ciii. 19.) And, were ye to reflect seriously upon it, your own consciences, as professing Christians, could not but tell you that it is so.

17 This therefore is a high aggravation of your crime, since in this, as well as all other cases, the man who knows what is right and good, acceptable to God, and suitable to the relation he stands in to him, and yet acts in direct contradiction to his light, thereby renders his sin abundantly greater, and more inexcusable and self-condemning, than theirs who do the same thing, but, through mere ignorance, have no notion of the evil of it, to restrain them from it; and the sinner, against the convictions of his own conscience, shall be more severely punished than others, in the great day of account. (See Luke xii. 47, 48.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

Alas! What dreadful work do the lusts of pride, covetousness, and envy make in the world! Hence proceed wars, and all manner of discords that are destructive to civil and religious society, and to a man's own soul: They carry him into wicked desires and attempts, which can turn to no good account; and either make him cast off prayer, or pervert its ends in asking temporal advantages, that he may gratify his own corruptions, instead of glorifying God, and doing good with them.

No

No wonder, that such carnal prayers are not answered.—O what an enemy to God, and adulterous disaffection to him in professors of his name, is an excessive fondness for any thing of this world! How justly doth the scripture condemn this sensual temper, which naturally works in us! And how contrary is it to the suggestions and influences of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in true believers, and freely gives grace, with all needful increases of it, to humble souls; but rejects the proud with abhorrence and disdain! How unsuitable to our creaturely dependence and Christian character is it, to form and prosecute schemes for this world, without a religious sense of, and dependence upon the providence of God, as if our times and the success of our affairs lay in our own hands, though life itself is but as a vapour that soon vanishes away! Surely every thing ought to be undertaken with an eye to God, and submission to his will. A contrary way of thinking and talking is a vain-glorious boast, dishonourable to God, and injurious to ourselves and others. It is indeed a scandal to the Christian name, that all or any of the forementioned impieties should be found among gospel-professors; and it is a high aggravation of their sin to go against the light of their own consciences in practising them. O how earnest should we be in our addresses to God for his grace to enable us to submit to his commanding and disposing will, and in bewailing our iniquities, and humbling ourselves before him for them! And what encouragement have we, in this way, to hope for his reviving presence and liftings up! And if, in a dependence on divine strength, we resist the temptations of the devil, he will find us too hard for him, and flee, like a conquered enemy, before us. But how cautious should we be never to imitate his temper, and give him an advantage over us, by slandering, censuring, and condemning our Christian brethren for little things, or things that may be allowable in them! This is to set up for judges, instead of obeyers of the law; and is a violation of its requirements to love them as ourselves; yea, is an invasion of God's prerogative, who alone is able effectually to vindicate its authority: O may it be unto our salvation, and not to our destruction!

C H A P. V.

The apostle denounces the judgments of God against the rich unbelieving Jews, who defrauded the poor, and lived in luxury and oppression, 1,—6. Exhorts the Jewish believers to patience and meekness under their tribulations, which would soon have an end, 7,—11. Cautions them against rash swearing, 12. Recommends prayer in afflicted, and praise in prosperous circumstances, 13. Prescribes prayer and anointing with oil for a miraculous recovery of the sick, 14, 15. Directs private Christians to mutual confession of their faults, and mutual prayer, 16,—18. And shews the happiness of being instrumental to the conversion of a sinner, 19, 20.

TEXT.

GO to now, ye rich men, weep, and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you.

PARAPHRASE.

COME now, ye carnal unbelieving Jews, who are bound in worldly wealth, and neither have, nor desire a better portion than the things of this life, let me seriously and closely reason with you about the evil and danger of your ways: Ye, of all others, have the greatest cause for bitter sorrow, even to floods of tears and howling lamentation, which ye must soon be forced to go into, on account of the terrible calamities of every kind, that are ready to fall upon you, unless ye be brought to repentance; and will overtake you wheresoever ye be scattered, and bereave you of all your earthly enjoyments, and

1 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

2 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

3 Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered in to

of life itself, in the general destruction of your nation; * and will be followed with still more dreadful miseries in an eternal hell.

2 Your ill-gotten and ill-managed treasures are cankered at the root; such of them as consist of corn and other fruits of the earth, are hoarded up, till they rot and putrify, and bring rottenness into your very souls; and such as consist of your wardrobes are laid by, till they be eaten up of moths, and will stand you in no stead; but, like a gnawing worm, will torment your consciences for ever.

3 Your abundance of gold and silver lies rusting in your bags and coffers, instead of being employed for the glory of God and the good of others; and will soon be as worthless and useless, as old rusty iron, to your fore disappointment and vexation, and will not profit you in the day of wrath; (*Prov. xi. 4.*) and the sinful methods ye have taken to get and dispose of them will bring the worst of all rusts upon them; will testify against you as covetous misers, that deserve the severest indignation of the just and holy God; and the guilt ye contract thereby will prey upon your bodies, as well as souls, in the fiery desolation that will consume you in this world, and in the unquenchable fire in the world to come. Ye have been laying up goods in store for many years, with vain hopes of finding comfort in them at the latter part of a long life; but, in reality, it has been only heaping them up, as spoils for your enemies, in the destruction of the *Jewish* nation, and will ultimately prove to be a dreadful *treasuring up of wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, &c.* (*Rom. ii. 5.*)

4 Behold, with horror and astonishment, what all your gains by griping and oppressive means are come to! The just wages of the poor labourers, who have reaped your corn with the sweat of their brows, which ye have fraudulently with-holden, directly contrary to the law of God, (*Lev. xix. 13.* and *Deut. xxiv. 15.*) is a crying sin, which, like the blood of *Abel*, calls aloud to heaven for justice to be shewn unto their relief, and your punishment: (*Exod. xxii.*

N O T E.

* The apostle, in this and the following verses apparently points at the days of fore destruction, that were then soon to come upon the *Jewish* nation, not only in *Judea*, but afterward with wider extent through distant countries, by the ravages of the *Romans*, in the way of God's righteous judgments, for their ob-

stinate infidelity and other iniquities. But as *that* was an awful specimen of divine wrath, which should be poured out upon them in the world to come, we may, with good propriety, carry the view forward to the final vengeance that will be executed upon all impenitent sinners at the great day.

to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

23. *Isa. v. 7.* and *Habak. ii. 11.*) And the mournful complaints of those, who with toil and labour have gathered in your harvest, are come up as a memorial for them, and against you, before the Lord of Hosts, who bears their cries, and whole kingdom rules over all, to right the injured, and take vengeance on their oppressors.

5 Ye, like the rich man in the gospel, (*Luke xvi. 19.*) have fared sumptuously every day, and indulged your luxurious appetites, as if all happiness lay in sensual pleasures upon the earth; and have gone into a merry and lascivious course of life: Ye have rioted upon the bounties of Providence, with as much gluttony and profuseness, as though every day were a festival, in which many beasts are slain for sacrifices to be feasted upon with jollity by the offerers and their friends. (*Prov. vii. 14.* and *Isa. xxii. 13.*) But in all this ye have been fattening yourselves, like sheep for the day of slaughter, which is at hand, when *the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be consumed as the fat of lambs, &c.* (*Pl. xxxiii. 20.*)

6 Nay, over and above all this, ye, like those of your own countrymen that procured the condemnation and death of the Lord Jesus, who is (*εὐδαιμον*) by way of eminence *the holy and just One*, (*Acts iii. 14* and *vii. 52.*) have, under pretended forms of law, persecuted as many righteous servants of his to death as ye could get into your power! And ye have done this to the holy professors of his name, who, like him, never offered the least violence to oppose or injure you. But God, who has hitherto exercised long forbearance toward you, will certainly espouse their cause, and avenge the quarrel of his covenant upon you.

7 These are trying dispensations of providence to you, my Christian brethren; but God permits, and over-rules them for the exercise and improvement of your faith and patience. (*Chap. i. 3, 4.* and *1 Pet. i. 6, 7.*) And therefore, though it be ever so unrighteous in your enemies to bring tribulations upon you, ye ought to bear them without murmuring at the holy hand that God has in them, and with all long-suffering, meekness, and Christian fortitude, till the Lord Jesus shall come to execute judgment on the Jewish nation, and deliver you out of their power; or shall come by death to rid you of all the troubles of this life, as he certainly will in his time, how great or many soever they be. (*Pl. xxxiv. 19.*) Observe, for your instruction, and imitation, that the farmer, when he sows his seed, does not immediate-

ly

ly expect a crop, but quietly waits a great while for the proper season of reaping the excellent produce of the earth; and continues with patient hope for it, till, by the blessing of heaven, he be favoured with such early rains, as may be needful for bringing up the corn; and with such after rains, as shall bring it to maturity, and plump the ear for the harvest.

8 Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

8 In like manner, ye, waiting for heavenly dews to fall upon you, ought to possess your souls in patience, till ye receive the happy fruits of your labours and sufferings, and to maintain a sedate and settled temper of spirit, a stedfast faith and holy resolution for God and godliness, under all present difficulties. And ye need not wax weary and faint in your minds, because ye have not yet received the deliverance which ye hoped for; but may assuredly conclude that it will not be long before it be brought to you: For the signal coming of Christ, with power and great glory, to the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, and the deliverance of his people from all their cruel persecutions, which he foretold; (*Luke xxi. 21, 27.*) and the time of your complete redemption from all the calamities of this life, hastens apace, and is near approaching.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold the judge standeth before the door.

9 Upon these comfortable considerations, take heed, my persecuted brethren, of groaning out your complaints, (*μὴ στεναζέσθε*) through envy, fretfulness, and desire of revenge against those of your nation, that oppress you; or against those of your professing fellow-Christians, that are less obnoxious to their rage, as too much favouring their darling notions of a temporal Messiah; lest any of you be condemned for your impatient murmurings and uncharitable censures: For behold, the Lord Jesus, the great Judge of all, is just at hand, as ready to recompense tribulation to those that trouble you, his faithful disciples; and to give you rest from all your grievances: (*2 Thess. i. 6, 7.*) And therefore ye may calmly refer the issues of all your troubles to him, in confidence that he will soon appear for your help, and save you.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

10 To encourage you hereunto, let me entreat you, my dear Christian brethren, to reflect upon the behaviour of the ancient inspired and holy prophets under their fore trials, who were beloved of God, and faithfully delivered their messages to the people in his name, by commission from him; let them be called to mind, as noble examples, for your support in suffering persecutions, and for your imitation in patiently enduring them with an entire submission to the will of the Lord.

11 Behold,

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

11 Behold, what judgment we who believe make of the afflictions of the children of God, We are so far from thinking them miserable, or out of favour with him, on this account, that we esteem and call them happy creatures, who are enabled to bear them with resignation, faith, and patience; (*chap. i. 2, 3, 12.*) and so are chastened of the Lord for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness, and afterwards reap the peaceable fruits of righteousness from a sanctified use of them, (*Heb. xii. 10, 11.*) and at last may be eternally saved. (*Matth. x. 22.*) To give you a remarkable instance of this sort, which ye, as conversant with the writings of the Old Testament, cannot be ignorant of, Ye have, doubtless, heard of the patient behaviour of Job, that dear and eminent servant of the Lord, with what humble submission and becoming acknowledgments of God, (*Job i. 21. and ii. 10.*) he endured a complication of the heaviest calamities, which Providence brought upon him for the trial and exemplary proof of his integrity; and ye must needs have known what a gracious and happy issue the Lord gave unto them all, in not only delivering him out of them, but also in manifesting himself to him in an extraordinary manner, with high testimonies of his approbation of him, and in restoring to him, with rich advantage, double of all that he had lost. (*Chap. xlii.*) Ye hereby evidently see that the Lord is (*πολυπλαγχιος*) a God of infinitely abounding compassion, and is (*οικτιριμος*) propense, like one whose bowels of love and pity are moved within him, to shew the tenderest mercy to them that fear him, in upholding them under, and carrying them through, and giving them blessed fruits of, all their trials and afflictions.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

12 But there is one flagrant sin, my dear brethren, which the infidel *Jews* are abominably addicted to, and I would in a special manner, and above all others that men are apt to fall into, through an impatient temper, warn you against, as exceeding affrontive, dishonourable and provoking to the great God, and as every way unprofitable in itself, and utterly inconsistent with the Christian character. What I mean is, that ye would never dare to go into rash and impious cursing* and swearing in a passion, or in common conversation, by putting an oath before all that ye say. Let no provocation cause you to swear profanely; nor let any oath be ever used unnecessarily, at all, either by heaven, which

18

NOTE.

* The words, rendered *above all* custom of prefixing an oath, in common things (*προ παντος*) literally signify before all; and may refer to the profane denied.

is God's throne, or by the earth, which is his footstool; (*Matth. v. 34-35*)* or by any other oath, which, whatever be pretended, is, in effect, swearing by the Creator of all things, whether his name be expressly mentioned or not. But let your conversation be so evidently dispassionate, honest, and upright, that a plain affirmation or denial, such as a bare *yes*, or *no*, may be sufficient to gain an entire credit to what ye say, lest ye fall under the condemnation of such as *take God's name in vain*; (*Exod. xx. 7.*) or of being either false-hearted professors, on one hand, or downright infidels, on the other.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

13 As to your deportment in adversity and prosperity, if any of you be in afflicted circumstances, which is often the lot of God's own people, let him betake himself to solemn and fervent prayer for relief: If, on the contrary, any of you be surrounded with the blessings of providence and grace, to the joy of his heart, let him give a sacred vent to his grateful sentiments, in cheerful thanksgivings and praises to the God of all his mercies, which may be very suitably expressed, by singing forth the honours of his gracious name in psalms and spiritual songs. These duties, which are indeed to have their turns through our whole lives, are especially seasonable in those respective situations.

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord:

14 If there be any one among you that labours under a bodily distemper, which is supposed to be inflicted upon him for some remarkable sin, (*ver. 15.* compared with *1 Cor. xi. 30.* see the note there) let him desire the officers of the church, and especially such of them as are endued with miraculous gifts, to come together; and let them pray with, or over him suitable to his case, and lay their hands upon him; (*Mark xvi. 18.*) and, as a sign of healing virtue, anoint him with oil in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, according to his appointment, (*Mark vi. 13.* see the note there) calling upon him to exert his divine power for answering the signal by an effectual cure †.

15 And

N O T E S.

* The *Jews* of this age were notoriously guilty of profane swearing, though not always by explicitly mentioning the name of God, yet by one or other of his creatures, which they did not reckon to be binding upon them; but which our Lord told them was, in effect, swearing by the God himself who made them. (See the note on *Matth. v. 34*.) And it seems to be with a special reference to these sorts of oaths, as well as to all profane swearing in common conversation, that Christ there, and our apostle here,

so earnestly remonstrates against them. But this is no argument against taking a solemn oath before a magistrate, or in a court of judicature, on important occasions; provided it be only by the name of God, according to his command. (See *Deut. vi. 13.* and *x. 20.* and *Isa. lxxv. 16.* and the note on *Heb. vi. 16.*)

† Anointing with oil was an ordinance for the miraculous cure of sick persons. (*Mark vi. 13.*) But since those extraordinary gifts are ceased, as being no longer necessary for the confirmation

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

15 And the prayer that is offered up by the elders and the sick person, (*Mark* v. 34. and x. 52. and *Acts* xiv. 9, 10.) with faith in the name of Christ, and with a particular extraordinary dependence on his power for a performance of what is humbly asked of him, shall be owned and succeeded in the Lord's delivering the patient from death, and recovering him to a state of health and strength: And if any particular sins have been the immediate occasion of his disease, they shall be forgiven him; in token, or, at least, as an emblem of which, the sickness shall be removed; and, through his own faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of them, they shall be pardoned as to the eternal, as well as temporal punishment, which they had deserved and exposed him to.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

16 As to your brotherly behaviour in common, be ready on all occasions to acknowledge any offences that ye have given one to another, according to our blessed Lord's own direction; (*Matth.* v. 23, 24. see the note there) or if there be any sins that lie upon your consciences, under a sense of their being the reason of God's contending with you in the way of his judgments, unbosom yourselves in free and humble confessions of them one to another, as Christian brethren, that ye may sympathize with, and know what to ask of God for each other by turns, as occasions require; and according to the knowledge ye have of one another's afflicted circumstances, be earnest in mutual prayer for each other, that the distressed among you, whether in body or mind, or both, may be healed of all their maladies. (*Heb.* xii.

NOTES.

of the gospel, our faith, in the common course of things, has now no warrant for using that ceremony; much less doth what is here said about it give any countenance to the papists sacrament of *extreme unction*, which they administer, not with oil only, but with oil and spittle; and that, not for the recovery of the sick, but for a pretended *purgation from the sins* of those, that are in the very article of death, or past hope of recovery. (*Vid. Par. in loc.*)

* Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, seem evidently to relate to the duty that is to be reciprocally exercised between *private Christians*, in distinction from what was said, in the two preceding verses, about the prayer of those *elders*, as most immediately intended, who were endued with *miraculous gifts* of healing. For the apostle here speaks of believers in

common, and of what they ought to do to, and for one another. (*αλλήλους καὶ ἑαυτοὺς ἀλλήλων*) And so here is no foundation for *auricular confession to a priest*; since what is here directed to, chiefly relates to offences which one had committed against another, and is so to be *mutual and reciprocal*, as the words import; and therefore, if it were to be understood of the *people* and the *priest*, it would oblige the priest to confess his faults to the people, as well as the people to the priest, which would scarcely go down with the popish advocates for this *priestly prerogative*; and surely it is as much the duty of the people to pray for their ministers, as of their ministers to pray for them; and the prayer which is said to *avail much*, is called the *prayerer*, not of the *elders*, but of the *righteous man*, as such.

xii. 13. and 3 *John* ver. 2.) And, for your encouragement, remember that the fervent in-wrought prayer (*everywhere*) of a good and holy man, who is himself sanctified, and accepted of God in Christ as righteous, and so has an interest at the throne of grace; the prayer that is excited in him, and conducted and animated with a sacred warmth of soul, by the Spirit of grace and supplication to help his infirmities, (*Zech.* xii. 10. and *Rom.* viii. 26.) has a wonderful power with God, and prevails, as *Jacob* did, when he wrestled for, and obtained the blessing. (*Gen.* xxxii. 28.)

17 *Elias* was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

17 We have a memorable example of the great efficacy of believing and fervent prayer in the prophet *Elijah*; he was a frail mortal man, of like natural and sinful infirmities, and of like sufferings and passions with ourselves; and yet was remarkably heard and answered in the very things which he prayed for. At one time, he, not in an angry mood, or with a revengeful spirit, but with great engagedness of heart and believing importunity, begged of God that the bottles of heaven might be restrained, in a way of judgment for the rebuke and conviction of king *Abab* and the *Israelites*, who were fallen into idolatry: (*1 Kings* xvi. 30.—33. compared with *chap.* xvii. 1.) And the Lord so fully answered his prayer, that the clouds of heaven were shut up; insomuch that no rain fell on the land of *Israel* for three years and a half together, by means of which great drought, a sore famine was brought upon the earth. (*Luke* iv. 25. see the note there.)

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

18 After this, in mercy to the people that had been reclaimed from their idolatry, and in confirmation of their faith in the God of *Israel*, (*1 Kings* xviii. 39.—45.) *Elijah* offered up his earnest prayer again for the return of plentiful and seasonable showers; and it pleased God in a wonderful manner to answer him, by sending an exceeding great quantity of rain from the clouds of heaven to revive the face of the earth, which thereupon yielded its fruits with rich increase. And God is still, as much as ever, a God who hears prayer, and never said to the spiritual seed of *Jacob* seek ye me in vain. (*Psal.* lxxv. 2. and *Isa.* xlv. 19.)

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

19 To conclude this epistle, in which I have remonstrated against the sins that abound among the unbelieving *Jews*, and have been too prevalent in some of you, my brethren, who make a profession of Christ's name, whosoever he be among you, that through infidelity, or backsliding and apostacy, runs astray from Christ, and from the truth of the gospel,

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

in principle and practice, by errors in doctrine and immorality of life; and any one of you, in your respective stations, be instrumental in turning him from his erroneous notions, and from his iniquity to God;

20 Let such an instrument of good consider the importance of this happy change; and when his endeavours are rendered effectual, by divine grace, to produce it, he ought to rejoice and bless God, in this reflection, that he who is so highly honoured, as to be the means of a sinner's conversion, or of a backslider's recovery from the erroneous thoughts, dispositions, and courses of his life, to God in Christ, will be the means of saving an immortal soul from spiritual death and eternal destruction; and of leading him into the way of life and peace, in which all his multiplied transgressions shall be covered from the eye of avenging justice, by the righteousness of the Redeemer, *which is unto, and upon all that believe, without difference*; (Rom. iii. 22.) and, by his conversion, many sins will be prevented, which otherwise would have been committed by him, and by others, through his bad example and influence, and would have appeared in open light at the day of judgment.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a snare are the riches of this world to a covetous and carnal mind! They are often got and misused with much guilt, and bring upon their owners the most distressing and aggravated sorrows. The cries of the injured and defrauded, and of the persecuted unto death, go up to the Lord of hosts, calling aloud for righteous vengeance to come down upon their oppressors and murderers; and what these spend in pomp and luxury, or unduely hoard up, will be a swift witness against them, and add to their stock of wrath against the day of wrath in the final judgment.—O what abundance of patience do the faints need in such a wicked and miserable world as this! But what encouragement have they to exercise it, since Christ will soon appear to reckon with all their enemies, and to deliver themselves out of all their troubles! They may learn the great lesson of patient waiting for the salvation of the Lord, from the husbandman, who waits with long patience for the harvest; from the ancient prophets, who, though dear to God, suffered many tribulations, and were patient under them; and from the eminent example of *Job*, who, though sorely afflicted for a while, calmly submitted to the divine will, and had wonderful experience, at last, of the tender mercy and compassion of God, which gloriously crowned all. How inconsistent is it with the Christian character to swear by God, or any of his creatures, or any petty oaths, in a passion, or in common conversation! And how becoming, to behave with such apparent integrity at all times, as shall engage a firm dependence on the truth of his bare affirmation, or denial! How prayerful should he be in affliction, and how full of praise in prosperity! And if the Lord, in the way of his righteous judgment, lay any disease upon him for some particular sins, he should desire the prayers of the officers and private members of the church, as the ordinary means, that God in the present state of things, in which miraculous gifts of healing are ceased, will own and bless for his recovery, whenever, upon the whole, it may be for the best: For the believing fervent prayer of a righteous man, that is animated by the Holy Spirit, has great power with God to obtain whatever is most for his glory and agreeable to his will. An eminent instance of this we have in the answers which were given to the prayers of *Elias*, a man of like human and sinful passions with ourselves, for shutting and opening the bottles of heaven. But how becoming is it for Christians,

in special cases of offence given to their brethren, or of burden upon their spirits, or of divine rebuke, to make frank and open confessions of their faults to each other, that they may the better sympathize with, and know how to order their prayers for one another! And since there are so great numbers of notorious sinners and apostates that run astray in principle and practice from the truth and holiness of the gospel. How encouraging is it for ministers and private Christians too, to do what in them lies for their conversion; and what an honour and pleasure to be instrumental thereunto! Since he who is the means of turning any transgressor from the evil of his ways to God, through Christ, contributes, in a subordinate manner, to the saving of an immortal soul from eternal misery, and to the preventing of many sins, and hiding others from the eye of God's avenging justice!

A PRAC.

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION

OF THE

FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE

OF THE

APOSTLE PETER,

IN THE FORM OF A

PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

THE apostle *Peter*, as he himself tells us, was the penman of this, and the second epistle that bear his name. And they are most probably supposed to have been wrote, the *first* either about the year of our Lord 65 or 66, and the *second* a year or two afterwards; not long before the apostle's martyrdom at *Rome*. (See Dr. *Whitby's* preface for confuting the popish pretence, as though the *first* were written about the year 44 or 45.)

The inscription of this epistle directs it to *the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, which seems to be much of the same import with the inscription of the apostle *James's* general epistle to *the twelve tribes, which were scattered abroad*, though the tribes of *Israel* are not expressed in this inscription, as they are in that.

However, the introduction to Mr. *Peirce's* paraphrase and notes on the the epistle to the *Hebrews*, and Dr. *Benson's* history of St. *Peter*, &c. would maintain that *both* the epistles of *Peter* were wrote rather to the *Gentile* than *Jewish* Christians, who were scattered in the various provinces above mentioned. But as all their reasonings and criticisms are, in my account, far from being conclusive; and as canvassing them might not be much to the edification of the common Christian, for whose use my paraphrase and notes are most immediately intended, I shall not trouble him with them; and, perhaps, they may in good measure be answered, by only supposing, (as I think we naturally may) that the apostle *principally* designed such *Jewish* converts, as were scattered throughout those countries, though not to the exclusion of such *Gentile* believers, as were mingled with them; in like manner as the apostle *Paul* wrote to the *Gentile* Christians, though not to the exclusion of *Jewish* believers, in most of his epistles to particular churches.

Several

Several considerations incline me to think, that our apostle had chiefly a respect to *Jewish* converts in both his epistles: For *Peter* was, in a peculiar manner, the apostle of the *circumcision*; and therefore it seems highly improbable, and out of character, to suppose that the *only epistles* he wrote were to *Gentiles*, and not *Jewish* converts; and our thoughts are led to these by several hints in the epistles themselves. He considers them as persons who were redeemed from their vain conversation, *received by tradition from their fathers*, (chap. i. 18.) which the *Jews* had been most notoriously and criminally fond of. (See *Mat.* xv. 2, 3. *Mark* vii. 3, 8, 9. and *Gal.* i. 14.) The apostle also speaks of *believing women*, as the daughters of *Sarah*; (chap. iii. 6.) which could not be said with just propriety of any but her descendents; since the *covenant*, by which *Gentile* believers come to be the children of *Abraham*, was made immediately and expressly with *him*, and not with *Sarah* his wife: The apostle's discourse about political and relative duties, in the second and third chapters, seem to have been occasioned by *Jewish* prejudices against being subject to *heathen* magistrates and masters: His *beseeching them to have their conversation honest among the Gentiles*, (chap. ii. 11, 12.) carries an intimation of their being a distinct people from them; the *judgment* which should *begin in the house of God*, and was just then at hand, (chap. iv. 17.) evidently relates to the destruction of the *Jews* and their temple, which most nearly concerned those of that nation. And in his *second epistle* he speaks of *always putting them in remembrance, as long as he was in this tabernacle, and of endeavouring that they might always have them in remembrance after his decease*; (chap. i. 12,—15.) which may point us to his ordinary personal ministrations, as well as to his writing these epistles, and best agrees to his office, character, and work, as the apostle of the *circumcision*. And his *stirring up their pure minds, by way of remembrance, that they might be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets*, (chap. iii. 1, 2.) intimates, that they had been before conversant with those words. It may also be very likely, that what he mentions of his *beloved brother Paul's having written to them*, (ver. 15.) refers to his epistle to the *Hebrews*.

Upon the whole then, as I apprehend, we may abide by the common opinion that *both* these epistles were written *mostly*, at least, for the use of *Jewish* professing believers in Christ, who were dispersed through the several places above mentioned in the inscription of the *first* of them.

The design of the apostle in this *first epistle* was to establish those converts in the faith of Christ, as their foundation; and to comfort them under severe persecutions; (chap. i. and iii. 1,—8.) to engage them to an honourable conscientious and winning behaviour among the *Gentiles*, and particularly to a faithful discharge of all the duties of their civil and family relations; (chap. ii. 9. *ad fin.* and iii. 1,—7.) and to an exercise of all the duties of brotherly love among themselves, and of their respective stations in the church; concluding with a prayer, that the God of all grace would, in and after all their terrible sufferings, strengthen and settle them in their faith and hope; and

and that they all might have peace in Christ Jesus. (*Chap. iii. 8. to the end of the epistle.*)

C H A P. I.

The apostle salutes the professing believers, to whom he wrote; and blesses God for his special benefits to them through Jesus Christ, in which they rejoiced under all tribulations, 1,—9. shews that salvation by Christ was foretold in ancient prophecy, 10,—12. and exhorts them to all holy conversation, suitable to their principles, privileges, and obligations, 13,—23.

TEXT.

PETER an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

PARAPHRASE.

PETER, who, by the immediate appointment and commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, was constituted an apostle principally of the circumcision, (*Gal. ii. 8.*) sends this epistle, under divine inspiration, chiefly to the professing Christians of Jewish extract, who are, not only in a metaphorical sense, but, properly speaking, strangers in foreign countries; as being expelled from their own land, and dispersed, by the providence of God, in the various Gentile contiguous provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, the proconsular Asia, and Bithynia.*

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, thro' sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

2 Who, notwithstanding their former revolt as a nation from the God of Israel, and from his covenant made with their fathers, appear, in the judgment of charity, by the tokens of his grace upon them in their effectual calling, to be the objects of his special and eternal choice, according to the kind distinguishing notice, which God the Father took of them before all worlds, (*see the note on Rom. viii. 29.*) with a gracious design of bringing them to eternal life, through the renewing and purifying operations of his Spirit on their souls, to engage and enable them

NOTE

* All these countries, as the best geographers think, lay in what was called the Lesser Asia, which was contained in, and spoken of by way of distinction from the large continent that bore the name of Asia, in the three grand divisions of the then known world. America having been discovered in latter ages: and therefore the Asia here meant and distinguished from Pontus, Galatia, &c. must be that which was sometimes called the Roman proconsular Asia, and at others, Asia proper. And the strangers scattered abroad throughout these provinces seem to be meant of those of the tribes of

Israel that did not return from the captivity to their own land, but sojourned in those countries, rather than of those that were dispersed by the persecution spoken of in *Acts viii. 1.* For these were scattered only throughout Judea and Samaria, though afterwards some of them travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only, *Acts xi. 19.* But all these countries were far distant from those into which these strangers are said to have been scattered. (*Consult Wells's geography of the New Testament.*)

them to yield themselves up unto all holy obedience to his commandments in heart and life; (*Eph. i. 4.* see the paraphrase and notes there) and to bring them under an application of the atoning blood of Christ, for the remission of their sins, which was typified by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices under the law, and, in that allusion, is fitly called *the blood of sprinkling*. (*Heb. xii. 24.*) May the free favour of God, with all its genuine fruits and effects, in their utmost variety, manifestations, and fulness; and all prosperity, spiritual and temporal, as consisting of peace with God, and peace in your own consciences, and with one another, and all around you, and every other comfortable circumstance, be abundantly increased towards, and in you!

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

3 When I reflect on the great and blessed things which God has already done for us, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and called, my heart is filled with gratitude, joy, and praise; and ye ought to join with me in cheerful ascriptions of all possible glory and thanksgivings to God, even the Father, who with respect to *the human nature* of Christ is *his God*; and with respect to *his divine nature* is, in a way of peculiarity and eminence, *his Father*; and with respect to his *office-capacity* is *the covenant-God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has raised up and anointed to be the Prophet, Priest, and King, and so the complete and only Saviour, of every one of us who truly believe in him. Adored and for ever magnified be his glorious name, who, not according to our deserts, but according to the wonderful riches and multitude of his free and sovereign mercy, in which he chose us, has now begotten us anew by his regenerating spirit, to a joyful hope, which springs from a lively faith, and revives the heart, has spiritual life and vigour in it, and has for its object a resurrection to eternal life, and shall certainly issue in it, through the quickening power and virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and through faith in him, who, by his sufferings unto death, has satisfied divine justice for our sins, and by his rising again from the dead for our justification, is publicly owned and acquitted by God the Father, *that our faith and hope might be in God* through him. (ver. 21.)

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

4 Blessed be his name who has given us a new and spiritual birth, whereby we are rendered capable of, and fitted for, as well as intitled by gracious adoption to, a noble inheritance, as the portion, answerable to the dignity of his sons: (*Rom. viii. 17.*) An inheritance, not of a perishing nature, as all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world are; nor an earthly inheritance

inheritance, like that of the land of *Canaan*, from which the *Jews* of the dispersion are driven away; but an inheritance, which will make a rich amends for the loss of *that*, and of all temporal possessions: An everlasting immortal inheritance, altogether pure and holy, incapable of being itself defiled, or being enjoyed by polluted souls; or of defiling any that are partakers of it: And never decaying in its worth, sweetness, or beauty; but always fresh, entertaining, and delightful; a glorious inheritance, consisting of the sublimest and most refined enjoyments which never fade, like the garlands of herbs and flowers with which conquerors used to be crowned; and is an inheritance securely laid up, and kept safe in heaven, by the immutable purpose and promise of God, and by the meritorious and efficacious mediation of Christ, as a precious inexhaustible treasure for all and every one of you that are begotten to it.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

5 Who, though weak in yourselves, and exposed to innumerable temptations and dangers which would be too hard for you, were you left to your own wisdom and strength to combat with them, are guarded and preserved as in a garrison, (*σχυρισμα*) by the almighty power of the great God himself, which is engaged for your preservation and safety against all your enemies, through a daily exercise of faith in its dependence on Christ, and realizing views of future glory, to animate you in your Christian course of obedience, and make you victorious over sin, Satan, and the world, (*Eph. vi. 16. and 1 John iii. 9. and v. 4.*) till ye arrive at complete salvation; which salvation is already prepared for you, in the design of God, from the foundation of the world, (*Matth. xxv. 34.*) and by the purchase and advocacy of Christ, who, as your head and forerunner, has taken possession of it for you; and which will soon be manifested in all its riches and delights, when he shall appear to judge the world, at the last day, and ye shall appear with him in glory: (*Col. iii. 3, 4.*) And so ye are as safely kept for this inheritance, as the inheritance itself is for you.

6 Wherein ye presently rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

6 In the believing view and hope of all this, ye well may, as I trust ye do, exceedingly rejoice, (as ye shall still more abundantly hereafter) even to an exultation, though at present, in this imperfect state of weakness, sin, and sorrow, ye for a little while (if God sees it needful for his glory and your own good) are grievously, and yet comparatively speaking, but *lightly*, afflicted, through a great variety of trials from Satan and the world, and from your own infirmities and frailties, which ye are now attended with, and are permitted to be so:

7 That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;

7 To the end that (*ὅνα*) the experiment and proof (*δοκιμὴ*, see the note on *Jam. i. 3.*) of your genuine faith in Christ, which is abundantly more to its advantage and honour, than the trial of gold can be to it, as *this*, how much soever it be refined from its dross by the fire, is of a perishing nature still, and may be worn away by use, and lose some of its particles in the very trial of it; Whereas true faith is improved and increased, and made to shine the brighter, by the blessing of God upon its trials, that it may evidently discover itself with such purity and eminence, as shall be to its highest commendation, and shall be openly approved of God, and graciously rewarded with honour and glory, as its fruit and consequence; and as shall ultimately redound to his most glorious praise; when Jesus Christ, *the author and finisher of your faith*, (*Heb. xii. 2.*) shall be revealed to crown his own work in you, at his second appearing to your complete salvation: And then it shall be found, that *these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* (*2 Cor. iv. 17.*)

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:

8 Though ye, who are far distant from *Judea*, never saw Christ with your bodily eyes; yet through the revelation which has been made of him to, and in your souls, by his word and Spirit, ye have a sincere desire after him, affection to him, esteem of him, and delight in him; in whom, though at present he be out of the reach of your corporal sight, and ye neither see him, as many did in the days of his flesh on earth, and as ye yourselves will in his state of exaltation hereafter; yet while ye realize and appropriate him by faith, and trust in him as your only Saviour, ye rejoice in him, and in hope of his glory, even unto a rapture and triumph, with a joy so sublime, heavenly, and satisfying, as surpasses the powers of language to express; a joy which is glorious in itself, and attended with all glorying in him; and is indeed a lively foretaste and earnest of the glory, with which ye shall hereafter be glorified with him. (*ἀγαλλίασις χάρις ἀνελκυστήρ καὶ διδοχαίριον.*)

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

9 When ye, like conquerors in the public games, shall receive as a reward of grace, (*τιμὴς*) the perfection and ultimate aim of your faith, and the end which it terminates and issues in, even the complete deliverance of your souls, which are the principal part of the man, and the salvation of which will draw after it *that* of your bodies too, from all sin, want, and misery; and the advancement of your whole persons to all the felicity and glory of the heavenly state.

10 Which

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you :

11 Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported

10 Which glorious and blessed salvation, as to be brought about, and clearly revealed in the Messiah's days, was foretold by the ancient inspired prophets, who were earnestly inquisitive, and exceeding diligent, like miners digging for precious ore, (*ἐκσυνόμενοι*) in their searches after the meaning of their own prophecies, when they spoke many ages ago, concerning the rich and eminent blessings of light and grace, pardon, purity and peace, hope and joy, which ye should be partakers of, with clear evidence of your own interest in them.

11 They being very solicitous, as *Daniel* was, by studying the sacred writings, (*Dan. ix. 2.*) to find out, to what purpose, and with a reference to what period of time, and what should be the particular signs, by which it might be known, as also whether it should be in days of preceding purity or vice, light or darkness, or of outward peace or trouble to the church, that the things should come to pass, which the Spirit of Christ *, whom he imparted to them, and who guided and acted in them, intimated, when he bore witness, long before-hand in their prophecies, to the things that related to the extremely painful and abasing sufferings of the Messiah, in soul and body, unto death, by which he should be cut off for the transgressions of his people, and make reconciliation for their iniquities; (*Isa. liii. 8.* and *Dan. ix. 24. 26.*) and that related to the glories (*δοξας*) of his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, and the effusion of his Spirit; and to the glory of the gospel-state, and, at length, of all his members with him, and in conformity to him, which should be the effect and consequence of his atoning sacrifice, and should abide for ever afterwards.

12 Unto which holy prophets, it was made known, by the suggestion of the Spirit, that their predictions were not to be fulfilled in their days, but in after-times; and that, though their own souls were refreshed, and their faith, together with the faith of the godly in those ages, was supported by them; yet that they did not therein

H 2

NOTE.

* *The Spirit of Christ's testifying the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, and his revealing to the prophets, that the testimony related to future ages, were the actions of a divine person, distinct from him, whose spirit he is, and whose sufferings and glory he testified; and his being called the Spirit of Christ, when he beforehand gave this testimony, shews that he as really existed, and was the Spirit of Christ then, as*

when Christ after his ascension sent him, (*John xvi. 7.*) and the Father sent him in his name; (*chap. xiv. 26.*) and that therefore he was properly the Spirit of Christ, or of the Son, (*Gal. iv. 6.*) as well as of the Father, prior to, and independent of their sending him, in consequence of Christ's sufferings and exaltation, and not merely on account of that mission.

ported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven: which things the angels desire to look in-
to.

therein so much serve themselves, or the then present generation, as they did us, who live under the New Testament-dispensation, and are favoured with its important blessings; which are now openly proclaimed, and faithfully declared to you, in the glad tidings of salvation, by them who have published the gospel of the grace of God to you in all its light, liberty, and glory; which has been divinely confirmed by the attending testimony and communication of the Holy Spirit, in his gifts and graces, as sent down from the exalted Saviour in heaven, according to his promise; (*Joh. xiv. 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7. and Acts chap. ii.*) which gospel unfolds things so excellent, profound and entertaining, that the holy angels themselves, those bright and happy intelligences, are exceeding desirous, like students greedy of further improvement in the best of all knowledge, to make critical and close enquiries into the manifold wisdom of God that is displayed in them; which was emblematically represented by the cherubim that were placed over the ark and mercy-seat (*Exod. xxv. 20.*) in a stooping posture, (*παρυπνισμένοι*) as though they would accurately pry into the things which were contained therein, and signified thereby. (See the note on *Heb. ix. 5.*)

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

13 Having therefore these revelations and encouragements, with respect to future and eternal blessings, take heed of waxing weary and faint in your minds; but as persons are wont to gird up the long garments, which are worn in Eastern countries, about their loins, to strengthen them for service, and prevent entanglements or incumbrances, in travelling, running, fighting, or any other exercises; and as the *Israelites* were to have their loins girded at the passover, when they were setting out from Egypt for the land of *Canaan*; (*Exod. xii. 11.*) so let it be your continual endeavour, by divine assistance, to gather your loose thoughts and affections together; to get rid of the cares and incumbrances of this life; to moderate your appetites to, and make a temperate use of, the things of this world, with holy vigilance, (*ὑπογρηγορεῖτε*) like servants that wait for the coming of their lord. (*Luke xii. 35.—37.*) And be careful to maintain a sincere, unshaken, growing, and persevering trust and hope in Christ, (*πίστεως ἀπαράλυστος*) to the end of your days, temptations, and conflicts, with joyful confidence and assured expectation of all the bliss and glory of the heavenly state, which is merely the gift of God's free favour, (*Rom. vi. 23.*) and is the perfection of the begun work of grace in you here; and which shall be brought into your complete and actual possession, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with

with his mighty angels; and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. (2 Thess. i. 7, 10.)

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance:

14 Behave then suitable to your spiritual, high and noble birth, privileges and hopes, as dutiful children, entirely subject to the authority and commandments, and submissive to the will of your heavenly Father in all things: And take heed of falling in with, (*μη κατακολουθετε*) or being conformed to the corrupt inclinations and desires, schemes, principles, practices, language, and fashions of the men of this world, and particularly of this degenerate age, as formerly, while ye were strangers to Christ and the gospel, and were involved in darkness and error, under the power and dominion of *fleshy lusts, which war against the soul*: (chap. ii. 11.)

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

15 But as God is essentially and perfectly holy, who has called you by his grace to the faith and fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye might be a holy people to him; so ye ought, as far as possible, to imitate and resemble him in the purity and sanctity of your hearts, and of your whole lives and conversation, at all times, in every circumstance of prosperity and adversity, and in every relation in which ye stand toward God and one another, and towards all men, whether friends or enemies, saints or sinners. This ye are obliged unto by a divine command;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

16 Because God says now to you, as he often did to his ancient covenant-people the Jews, as recorded in the writings of the Old Testament, (*Lev. xi. 44. and xix. 2. and xx. 26.*) I demand that ye be a holy people unto me, after my own heart and likeness; for I the Lord your God and Father, am a holy God, *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity* without the utmost detestation of it. (*Habak. i. 13.*)

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

17 And if, answerable to your holy profession, ye from your very hearts call God your Father in Christ, and invoke him in his name, and pay all religious homage to him, who without any partial respect of persons, on account of their earthly ancestors, or external relations and privileges, judges concerning them, and passes sentence upon them in his word, and will do so *in righteousness, by Jesus Christ* at the last day, (*Acts xvii. 31. and Rom. ii. 16.*) according to what every one's works now are, and shall then be found to be, whether good or evil, in proof of their being his *obedient children*, (*ver. 14.*) or not. These solemn considerations of God should excite and engage you to an humble and awful reverence of him, and fear of offending him; together with a godly jealousy over your own hearts, and fear of being left to yourselves, for the

the little time that ye may be here in a state of pilgrimage, passing on through this world, as strangers upon earth, to your own better country and inheritance in heaven, to which ye are begotten, (*ver. 3, 4*) and which God has prepared for you. (*Heb. xi. 9, 10, 13, 16.*)

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers;

18 And ye ought to be the more strongly induced, and encouraged to go on in this holy conversation and religious fear, since ye, as true believers, must needs be assured that your redemption and recovery from all the corrupt, empty, defiling, and destructive manners and customs, which in the days of your sin and folly ye were brought up in, and went into, as handed down from age to age by the traditions of your rabbies and ancestors, and as taught and practised by your immediate fathers after the flesh; ye, I say, cannot be ignorant that your deliverance from all this, and from its dreadful consequences, was not purchased by so mean a price as the perishing riches of this world, such as the silver and gold which are paid for buying poor captives out of bondage, misery, and slavery among men:

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot:

19 But ye know that it was by no less a price, than the noble and unvaluably precious blood, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, as the anointed Saviour, who, *through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God*, (*Heb. ix. 14.*) as an atoning sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, (*Eph. v. 2.*) perfectly holy, and free from all original or actual defilement, flaw or defect, as was typified by the paschal lamb, and the lambs which were offered as daily sacrifices every morning and evening, under the law, and were to be without any kind of blemish, (*Ex. xii. 5. and Num. xxviii. 3, 4, 9.*) that they might the better prefigure this immaculate and eminent Lamb of God:

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;

20 Who was most certainly intended to be the only true propitiatory sacrifice, long before those legal shadows of him were instituted; yea, who was originally appointed of God herunto in his eternal decree, before the foundation of the earth was laid; but it was in the fulness of time, that he was sent into our nature and world, (*Gal. iv. 4.*) and so was manifested in the flesh, to redeem them that were under the law; and in these concluding days of the *Jewish* age, and in the beginning of this last dispensation of God's grace to the church, he was clearly made known, and demonstrated to be the great and only Redeemer of lost sinners, which he really is, and is now openly declared to be, for your eternal salvation;

11 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

12 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

13 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

14 For all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man

as

21 Who through him, as the only Mediator, trust and hope in God, as a reconciled God and Father, who, in testimony of his being thoroughly appeased by the blood of Christ, raised up his crucified body from the grave, and exalted him in human nature to the highest honour, authority, and dominion, at his own right hand, that ye, encouraged by this unquestionable evidence of his being the true and accepted Messiah, and of his having finished the work which his Father gave him to do upon earth, might place your entire dependence and confidence in God through him, for all the blessings ye need here, and for a resurrection to eternal life and glory hereafter; ye therein relying upon God, as a God of peace and Father of mercies to you on his account.

22 Since ye have been enabled to mortify and subdue the power of those corruptions which formerly defiled your souls, and to become holy in heart and life, (ver. 14, 15-) by the obedience of faith, according to the command of God, and the truth of the gospel, (see Rom. xvi. 25, 26. and 1 John iii. 23.) through the powerful operation of the divine Spirit, who has wrought this holy and happy change in you; and since, being thus sanctified through the truth, (John xvii. 17.) ye are brought to a sincere, undissembled and hearty affection to your Christian brethren, as such, let it be your daily conscientious care to cultivate this brotherly love, yet more and more, towards one another, not merely in word, but in truth, with all its substantial fruits and genuine effects, and with the intense fervour of a heart purified by faith, and by regenerating grace:

23 Ye being, as I trust, really partakers of a new and spiritual birth, which doth not proceed from mortal seed, like your natural birth, nor from a corrupt principle, which produces only corruptible effects, like what the carnal Jews received, with all its external privileges, by descent, as the natural seed of Abraham; but is a supernatural, spiritual, and immortal birth; ye being begotten by means of the Word of Truth, (Jam. i. 18-) which is incorruptible in itself, and in its vital production, and which, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, is of quickening efficacy, and, like its author, remains unchangeably the same in its own nature, and in its immortal virtue for ever; and so brings forth a nobler birth than can be derived from the most famous ancestors upon earth.

24 For all fleshly descent, with its fairest fruits, may properly be compared to the green grass or herb of the field; (Isa. xl. 6, 7.) and all the natural and acquired

as the flower of
grass. The grass
withereth, and the
flower thereof fall-
eth away :

25 But the word
of the Lord endu-
reth for ever. And
this is the word
which by the gos-
pel is preached un-
to you.

acquired endowments of man, as man, and external privileges of any man, in his present state of degeneracy, and all the ornaments of nature and art, as well as the honours of pedigree, which carnal minds pride themselves in, and the *Jews* boast of in their relation to *Abraham* : All this may be likened to the gay and beautiful flower which the grass bears in its verdure ; it all soon fades and dies away, like blighted and withering grass, together with its most showy and admired adornings, that sicken and drop off, like the flowers of the field, when the wind passes over it, and it is gone. (*Pf. ciii. 15, 16.*)

25 But so incomparably more excellent is the word of the Lord, (*Isa. xl. 8.*) and the spiritual birth produced by it, that it always abides the same in its own nature and effects, as *the seed which remains*, in true believers ; (*1 John iii. 9.*) and is ever living and enlivening without decay of its virtue, and will be effectual to make them happy for ever. And this is no other than that divinely inspired word, which contains the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and is communicated to you in the promulgation of the gospel by his ministring servants, and rendered efficacious in the renovation of the whole man, by the blessed Spirit, unto eternal life.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

What a beautiful and harmonious concurrence is there in the election of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the Spirit, for producing faith and holy obedience here, in order to complete salvation hereafter ! Blessed be God, that wherever his grace takes effect upon any of us, we are new born to a happy and glorious immortality ; and our souls are purified by the obedience of faith, unto a sincere love of the brethren, through the Spirit, by means of the gospel, which has a quickening virtue, and ever lives in its efficacy to maintain the principle of spiritual life, till it be perfected in life eternal : We are therein begotten as the children of God, according to his rich and abounding mercy, to a living hope of heaven, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and to an enjoyment, in due time, of that glorious inheritance, which is incorruptible, free from all impurity, and eternally abiding and entertaining, without decay : And as this is made ready and reserved in heaven for us ; so we are safely kept by the power of God, through faith, to that salvation, which shall be revealed in all its fulness, grace, and glory at the last day, for which we believe in an unseen Jesus. O delightful prospect and security to all that are born of God ! How transcendent to the perishing honours and advantages of this life, which fade and die, like the grass and flower of the field ! With what transport may their faith triumph in Christ amidst all the various momentary afflictions, which God sees to be needful for them, that their faith being exercised, proved, and improved, by means of those fiery trials, to better purpose than gold tried in the fire, may shine with the brighter honour and glory at the final appearing of Jesus Christ !—What a solid foundation for our faith have we in him, who was appointed of God from all eternity to be his salvation ; was foretold by the ancient prophets ; and is now more clearly revealed in the gospel ! He came in the fulness of time to redeem his people from all the sin and ruin of the fall, and of traditional corruptions, not with silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish ; and his Father raised him from the dead, and exalted him in our nature to the highest authority and dignity, that our faith and hope might be emboldened to fix on God, as our reconciled God and Father through him. How surprising and im-
portant

portant are these things! The holy angels closely study them; and we ought to do so too, as being more nearly concerned in them.—How affectionately should we love the once suffering and now exalted Saviour, and all our Christian brethren for his sake! How holy ought we to be in obedience to the commands, and in imitation of our heavenly Father, who, as an impartial judge, has no respect of persons, but will pass a final sentence of happiness, or misery, by Jesus Christ, upon the whole world, according to the different kinds and degrees of their works! With what godly fear should we reverence him all the days of our lives! And how should we behave with vigilance and sobriety as pilgrims and strangers, who no longer fall in with the corrupt manners of this world, as in the time of our unregeneracy; but travel through it to our heavenly home, and maintain a steadfast hope to the end of life, that he, who has begun the good work in us, will finish it in eternal glory! May grace and peace be abundantly multiplied to all such!

C H A P. II.

The apostle recommends a temper suitable to their character, as born again, and a daily recourse to Christ as their only foundation, 1,—10. Directs their holy conversation among the Gentiles, 11, 12. Exhorts subjects and servants to pay all proper obedience to their civil governors and masters, 13,—18. And to be patient, in imitation of their suffering Saviour, under all hardships that might be wrongfully laid upon them, 19,—25.

TEXT.

Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking,

PARAPHRASE.

SINCE therefore ye are partakers of a new and spiritual birth, whereby ye are formed for purity and brotherly love, (*chap. i. 22, 23.*) ye ought to put off, cast away, and utterly abhor (as ye would old rotten and filthy garments that are unfit to be worn) all manner of wickedness or naughtiness, (*κακὰ ἔργα*, see *Jam. i. 21.*) and particularly all malicious, spiteful and revengeful heart-burnings, designs and practices against your fellow Christians, or any one whatsoever; together with all frauds, deceitful flatteries, and insincere compliments; and all hypocritical professions of religion toward God, and of respect, love, and friendship to others; as also all envious grudging and repining at their prosperity; and all backbitings, defamations, and detracting words, which proceed either from a guileful, or malicious, or envious disposition of the heart.

2 As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

2 And as all these defiling and pernicious evils are to be entirely abandoned; so, as new-born infants long after the mother's milk, ye, under a feeling sense of your wants, ought to have eager appetites for, and earnest desires after the pure, uncorrupted word of God, (*λογικὸν ἀδολον*) as containing proper food and nourishment for rational and immortal souls, that ye may grow in knowledge and grace, comfort and holiness, and in all spiritual strength and stature unto a

perfect

perfect man in Christ, (*Eph. iv. 13.*) by means of that very word of the gospel, by which ye were regenerated, and which lives and abides for ever. (*Chap. i. 23.*)

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious:

3 Ye not only ought to have, but ye certainly will have an utter aversion to all sin, and an appetite to the good word of God, (*ver. 1, 2.*) in case ye have really had, as I hope, an experimental acquaintance with, and a true relish and savour of, the mercy and grace of the Lord Jesus to your own souls, though it be but as a taste, in comparison with what ye shall hereafter enjoy in, and from him.

4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

4 To whom ye are to be daily applying by faith for all further edification, support, and establishment, as unto the only foundation of all your security, hope, and happiness; which, in allusion to the foundation of the temple, in which the Jews glory, may be compared, not only to a stone for solidity and strength, firmness and duration; but, by way of eminence, to a living stone,* as he has life in himself, and communicates quickening influence, and ever lives to animate all that are united to him, and built upon him: He is indeed despised and rejected, as by the Jewish rulers, (*Luke xx. 17.*) so by all carnal Jews, and unbelievers, who see no form, comeliness, or beauty in him to desire him, (*Isa. liii. 2.*) and will not come to him, that they might have life; (*John v. 40.*) but he was chosen of God, and appointed to be the foundation of his church from all eternity; (*chap. i. 20.*) and is most excellent in himself, dear and honourable in the sight of God his Father, (who has highly exalted him) and in the esteem of all that believe in him, (*ver. 7.*) as completely able to bear the whole weight of God's glory, and the salvation of his church, which he has laid upon him.

5 Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer

5 And ye, thus coming to him, are, as it were, living stones, (*as λίθοι ζῶντες*) as being spiritually alive by derivation from him, in virtue of your union with him, who is your living and enlivening foundation; and are erected and edified in the noblest manner

N O T E.

* A living stone in the literal sense may be thought an inconsistent idea. But as this and several other expressions in the following verse are evidently metaphorical, and designed to signify Christ as a spiritual foundation, and his members as the building erected upon it, in allusion and preference to the temple at Jerusalem, which the Jews looked upon as their highest glory; there is a striking beauty, vigour, and emphasis in

the language, and no more impropriety in Christ's being spoken of as a living stone, than as living bread, and a living way, (*John vi. 51.* and *Heb. x. 20.*) to shew his excellence above all other bread, or ways. And the apostle Peter's speaking of him, under the metaphor of a living stone, shews that he did not account himself, but Christ only, to be the Foundation-stone of the church.

offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

ner upon him, being *built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit*; (Eph. ii. 22.) all the parts of which building are of a spiritual nature, such as God delights to dwell in after a more gracious and beneficial manner, than he ever did in the temple, which was built of the most beautiful stones: (*Luke* xxi. 5.) Ye are also become more excellent priests to God, than those under the law, to bring and present, not ceremonial and typical sacrifices, like them, much less atoning sacrifices, like *that* of our Lord; but spiritual offerings of self-dedication, prayer and praises, alms-deeds, and all sort of fruits of righteousness, (*Rom.* xii. 1. *Phil.* i. 11. and *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16.) which are well-pleasing to God, and graciously accepted of him, through, and on account of the propitiatory sacrifice and intercession of Christ, the only mediator, who has reconciled you to God, introduces you to him, and renders both your persons and services acceptable in his sight.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in *Sion* a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

6 Accordingly, we have a testimony of the following purport concerning Christ, as it is contained in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, (*Is.* xxviii. 16.) Observe, says God, with attention and holy admiration, faith and hope, love and joy, I, the sovereign Lord of all, have of my own mere good pleasure appointed and provided, fitted, prepared, and placed the Messiah in my Church*, as a sure foundation and chief corner-stone, which has been tried and proved, and found effectual, to unite *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the Old and New Testament-church, and cement all the members of *both* firmly and compactly together; and to add strength and beauty to them; a stone, which I, in infinite wisdom and grace, have chosen for this purpose; which is excellent and honourable in itself, and exceeding dear to me. And whosoever he be, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, a greater or lesser sinner, that depends entirely on Christ, or builds by faith on him, as his sure and only foundation, shall never be ashamed to own him, or be confounded by any of his enemies for professing his name; nor shall he ever be ashamed or confounded, through any disappointment of his hope in

I 2

Christ,

N O T E.

* In *Sion* may likewise possibly refer to *Jerusalem*, which is often called *Sion* and *mount Sion* in the *psalms* and the *prophets*; and so God's laying this chief Corner-stone in *Sion*, may point to the place where our Lord finished the work of redemption; where the glad tidings of salvation by him were first published, and from thence spread abroad; (*Psal.*

cx. 2. and *Isa.* ii. 3.) and where the first gospel-church was erected on this foundation. (*Acts* ii. 41,—47.) But as *Sion* and *mount-Sion* are very commonly used for God's church and people in the Old Testament, and in *Heb.* xii. 22. I have rather chose to give the paraphrase in that sense, as most agreeable to the current of the context.

Christ, as they are, who inconsiderately build on a sandy foundation, and whose vain confidences are defeated, through rash and precipitate measures, and over-haste to accomplish them: (see the note on *Rom. ix. 33.*) But he shall have boldness in the day of judgment, (1 John iv. 17.) as one discharged from guilt and condemnation, and made perfect in holiness and happiness, through the Redeemer's righteousness.

7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

7 He therefore is a high honour, (*τιμή*) and cannot but be of high esteem and endearment to you who believe in him, and build all your hopes entirely upon him; he, in his person, offices, and benefits, and in his relation to you, is altogether lovely in your account, and is, and for ever will be, your crown and glory, honouring you, and honoured by you: But to them who, being disobedient to God and him, and to his word, set him at nought and reject him by unbelief, this very stone, which the Jewish rulers, who pretended to be, and ought to have been, the builders of the church of *Israel*, would not receive, but disapproved of, as the foundation of the gospel-church, according to a prophetic account of him and them; (*Psa. cxviii. 22.*) even he is by the ordination and settlement of God, notwithstanding all their spite and rage against him, the foundation, chief corner-stone, strength and glory of his spiritual house.

8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

8 And at the same time, according to another prophecy, (*Isa. viii. 14.*) he is become, like a stone that lies in mens way, at which they stumble and fall to their hurt, and like a rock, which they rashly dash themselves against to their destruction; he is so to them, who are offended at the doctrine of the gospel, which sets him forth as the only foundation that God has laid, and besides which no other can be laid, to answer its end; (*1 Cor. iii. 11.*) they being obstinately unbelieving and refractory, to which God, in his holy sovereignty and righteous judgment, purposed to leave them, as to the free choice of their own perverse hearts; and, for which, he determined that this stone should fall, and his justice should be glorified on them, to their utter ruin. (See the note on *Rom. ix. 18.*)

9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you

9 But ye, who are built upon Christ, as your foundation, are, in the best and most valuable sense, partakers of all the blessings, that were signified by the external privileges and national honours of the visible church of *Israel*; (*Exod. xix. 6.* and *Deut. vii. 6.*) ye are a new-born generation and kindred (*γενος*) of spiritual and noble birth, whom God has set apart for himself by eternal choice, and effectual calling; ye have

you out of darkness into his marvellous light :

have an unction from the Holy One, and are *kings and priests unto God*, (Rev. i. 6.) as, like *princes*, ye have power with him, and victory over sin, Satan, and the world, together with a holy dominion over your own spirits, and are heirs of the kingdom of heaven; and as, like *priests*, ye are separated from the rest of the world, and consecrated to God for offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ: (ver. 5.) Ye are also a holy society formed into one spiritual body, like a nation collected together, under Christ your Lord and King, sanctified by his Spirit, governed by his laws, and embarked in the same common cause and interest: And ye are a purchased and special property to him, that, suitable to your dignities, privileges, blessings, and obligations, ye might both really and intentionally display the glory of divine virtues and perfections, such as the infinite wisdom and power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of God; and might shew forth, in word and deed, his honour and praise, who has called you by his grace, and delivered you from the darkness of ignorance and error, sin and misery; in which ye were formerly involved; and has brought you into the most wonderful and affecting light of truth and grace, holiness and comfort, which he has caused to shine in your hearts: (2 Cor. iv. 6.)

to Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

10 Who, for ages past, have been disowned of God, and divorced from his visible covenant; (Jer. iii. 8. and Hos. i. 6, 9.) but now by the grace of the gospel, through Jesus Christ, are brought into the sweet and abiding relation of a covenant-people to him; and who, during all those former ages, were shut out from the distinguishing effects of his special mercy, but have now found mercy with him, unto the renovation of nature, the forgiveness of sins, and justification of life, according to Hosea's prophecy: (chap. ii. 23.) And this, in a higher sense, may be said of those *Gentiles* among you, who are now brought to the faith of Christ, and so become the spiritual seed of Abraham. (See the note on Rom. ix. 25.)

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul;

11 In consideration therefore of these distinguishing favours, which God has bestowed upon you, my dear brethren, whom he has *formed for himself, that ye might shew forth his praise*, (1st. xliii. 21.) I earnestly entreat, and exhort you (*παραινω*) to look upon yourselves as pilgrims and strangers upon earth, who are travelling onward to a better country; (Heb. xi. 13, 16.) and I beseech you, as such, to renounce and keep clear of all those inward workings of sensual inclinations, inordinate affections, and desires after

ter earthly things, which arise from the corruption of nature, and exert themselves by the body; and are contrary to the liberty, peace and honour, purity and holiness of your renewed souls; and, as the worst of all enemies, are engaged in a perpetual war against them, and do their utmost to defile, disturb, ensnare, and destroy them.

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

12 Take heed that the whole of your behaviour towards, and under the observation of, the unconverted *Gentiles*, among whom ye live, be decent, honourable, and commendable for its amiable beauty, (*καλῶς*) every way worthy of your holy profession; to the end that, whereas they seek all occasions to reproach you, on account of your profession of Christ, and to speak against you, as though ye were a refractory, useless, and mischievous sort of people, and practisers of iniquity, they may be effectually confuted by your regular, blameless, holy, benevolent, and lovely deportment in every relation of life, by means of which, they, as eye-witnesses of it, may be induced to think well of you and of your religion, and may be themselves brought to glorify God, by admiring his grace in you, and by imitating your good conversation in Christ, when they come narrowly to inspect into it, and when he shall look upon them and visit them in his mercy, (*Luke i. 68.*) and shall set his gospel home with light and power upon their hearts; and so render it effectual to their own salvation.

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

13, 14 In order hereunto, let me guard you against some things, that give occasions of great offence to your enemies, as for instance, how strong soever the prejudices of some of you may be, through *Jewish* notions, against obeying heathen magistrates, remember, that as the *theocracy*, or that divine form of government, in which God was the King of *Israel*, is expired, it is now your duty, as Christians, to be subject in all matters of a *civil* nature, to every secular power, which is legally set over you by the appointment and consent of the community; which, on that account, may be called the *ordinance of man*; and yet is the *ordinance of God*, as he has appointed and ordered it for the good of human society, and by his providence directs and inclines bodies of people to set up such a form of it, as they apprehend to be best for the preservation of all their civil and religious rights, liberties, privileges and properties, and for their protection and safety in an enjoyment of them: (see the notes on *Rom. xiii. 1, 2.*) And ye ought to submit yourselves to its rulers in obedience to the command of the Lord Christ, (*Matth. xxii. 21.*) and for the honour of his name, that it may not be evil spoken of,

as though he were the author of a religion which subverts the laws and rights of civil society. Ye therefore should think yourselves obliged, in conscience, to pay chearful obedience in all lawful things to unbelievers, as well as others, that hold the reins of government where ye live, according to their political character and authority; whether to the sovereign, such as a king or emperor, like the *Roman Caesar*; or to subordinate magistrates, like the governors of provinces, and inferior officers, as those that are deputed by him, and act under his commission, in the several parts of his dominion, to execute the just laws of the country, according to the ends for which God has appointed their authority; as particularly for inflicting deserved punishment upon those that are immoral and profane, disobedient to the just laws of government, injurious to the lives and properties of others, and disturbers of the public peace; and for protecting, encouraging, favouring, and rewarding those who behave as becomes faithful subjects, and are orderly, sober, honest, and benevolent in their stations. (*Rom. xiii. 3,—5.*)

15 For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

15 For it is the declared will and command of God, and well-pleasing in his sight, that, by a regular and commendable course of life, ye disprove, and stop the mouth of unreasonable and wicked calumnies, which men of weak and prejudiced minds, who are strangers to God, and to your true character, would raise against you and your religion, as if it made you bad subjects.

16 As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

16 It is his will, that ye conduct in such a manner, as becomes those, who, as his free men, are indeed delivered from the tyranny of sin and Satan, and from the ceremonial yoke, and the curse of the moral law; and are free from all obligations to submit to impositions upon conscience by any authority of men: And he requires, that ye never turn this liberty into licentiousness; nor make pretences of asserting it, as a cover to sedition and wickedness, (*τὴν ἀνομίαν*) or any malignant evil whatsoever; but that ye use it only for such good purposes, as God approves of in them that are his *servants*, as well as free-men; and are bound to do every thing in obedience to him, as your supreme Lord and King, who has the highest demands upon you, and enjoins the duty ye owe to him, and to others, according to his will.

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

17 Under this conviction therefore, see that ye esteem, and pay a suitable respect, on every occasion, to all ye have to do with, according to their several ranks and stations, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, Christians or heathens, as far as any commendable

able thing appears in them. Entertain and express the most affectionate love to your believing brethren of all denominations, as members of Christ, and of the household of faith together with yourselves. Do every thing with a religious, filial, and reverential fear of God, and of offending him, like true worshippers of him, who always act with a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Upon this principle, and as far as is consistent with it, behave as loyal subjects in paying all civil homage and respect to the person and office of the chief ruler, as such, whom God in his providence has invested with legal dignity and authority over you; even though, like *Nero* the present emperor, he be a heathen prince and inveterate enemy to Christianity.

18 Servants be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the toward.

18 As to those of you who are (*οικεταί*) household servants of every rank, whether slaves or not, that may be persuaded to think yourselves no longer obliged to pay obedience to unbelieving masters, it certainly is your duty to be humbly submissive to their lawful orders, with a becoming reverence of them, whatever be their religious character; and to serve them with fidelity, and fear of offending them, and of offending God, by disobedience to their just commands. (*Col. iii. 22.*) This duty is to be paid, not only to such masters as are generous, kind, meek, and merciful in their temper and behaviour; but even to those also, who are austere and morose in their carriage to their servants, especially if it be only because they are Christians.

19 For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

19 For it is matter of praise, and favours of a gracious spirit, and is (*χαρεὶς*) a free gift of God, and acceptable to him, if any one, for the sake of his religion, and from a conscience toward God, patiently and quietly suffers abusive, grievous, and injurious treatment, without any just provocation given by him, or any fault of his own.

20 For what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently; this is acceptable with God.

20 For what honour to Christ, or to yourselves; or what room for commendation can there be, if, when ye have been guilty of any neglect, unfaithfulness, or misdemeanor, ye are severely beaten for it according to your deserts, and are forced to submit to it, as the fruit and due reward of your own evil doings? There can be no credit to religion, or to you in this; your crime makes such sufferings a reproach, instead of an honour, both to God and yourselves. But if when ye perform the duties of your places with diligence and fidelity, and are conscientious in your religious devotions, and are chastised for it, and bear it all with humble patience and submission; this is an excellent

and holy temper, which God freely gives, and is highly pleased with. (*χαρις.*)

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps:

21 For when ye became Christians, ye were called to submit, even with patience and meekness, to injuries and reproaches for Christ and the gospel's sake; because our Lord Jesus himself, willingly underwent the greatest sufferings and revilings, in his love and kindness to us *, and particularly to you, for your advantage, and indeed in your room and stead; and therein, among still higher designs of his death, (see ver. 24. and chap. iii. 18.) left you a most perfect pattern of patience in sufferings, to the end that ye, in love, duty, and honour to him, might tread in his steps, as exactly as possible, by imitating him in this, and in the whole of his blameless behaviour.

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

22 Who, notwithstanding all the false and malicious accusations of his enemies, never was guilty of the least fault in any one act of his life, but was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and went about doing good*: (Heb. vii. 26. and Acts x. 38.) Nor was there ever found the least insincerity, deceit, or falsehood in his words, or doctrine; nor could the worst of his adversaries ever prove any thing of that kind upon him: But in the most eminent sense, (answerable to *Levi* his type) *the law of truth was in his mouth; and iniquity was not found in his lips*: (Malac. ii. 6.)

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

23 Who, when he was shamefully reproached, as a blasphemer, an impostor, and one possessed of a diabolical spirit, and was contemptuously spit upon, and derided under the mock-title of a king, never returned the least opprobrious language upon his insolent and impious adversaries; when he suffered the utmost indignities and barbarities in the judgment-hall, and at his death, he never discovered the least impatience, nor threatened to avenge himself, as he justly might, and easily could, upon his persecutors; but meekly and calmly referred himself and his cause to his heavenly Father; trusting in him to give righteous judgment between himself and his crucifiers; and at the same time praying, that, instead of avenging their wickedness in murdering him, he would graciously forgive them, through his atoning blood: (see *Isa. liii. 7.* and *Luke xxiii. 34.*)

24 Who his own self bare our sins in

24 Who, being sinless in himself, not only left a matchless example of patience in his sufferings; but cheerfully

NOTE

* Those copies, that read *ὡς ἡμεῖς*, called—that ye should follow his steps for you—leaving you an example, are exprest by verbs of the second person plural, seem best to comport with the structure of the sentence; since ye were *unre-*

in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

cheerfully submitted to them with a still much more important and endearing view, as he freely became our surety and substitute, to answer for our sins, and bear the punishment, that in law and justice was due for them, which *he put away by the sacrifice of himself*, (Heb. ix. 26.) when his body was lifted up on the cross in the greatest extremity of torture, and his soul, which was also made an offering for sin, (1st. liii. 10.) was exceeding sorrowful even unto death; (Matth. xxvi. 38.) to the end that, by the merit, and in virtue of his sufferings, we being freed from the dominion, as well as from the guilt of sin, like persons dead to it, might live in all holy obedience, and bring forth fruits of righteousness to God through him; (Rom. vi. 2, 6, 11, 13.) by whose wounds, which were made upon his body by scourgings and piercings, unto the drawing of blood, we, in the application of this sovereign balm, through faith in him, are cured of the worst of all wounds and maladies which sin had made upon us; wounds beyond all comparison worse than any sores that can be made upon your bodies, who are servants, and even slaves, by the severest stripes that the most cruel masters can lay upon you. This therefore should thoroughly reconcile you to them, and quiet and comfort you under them.

25 For ye, while left to yourselves in your unconverted state, were, like wandering sheep, even the lost sheep of the house of Israel, running astray from God, from his fold, ordinances, and commandments; and running from the ways of truth, righteousness, and peace, into every sinful and dangerous path that leads to eternal destruction: But now, through the enlightening and renewing operations of the Spirit, by means of the gospel, (*anagorai*) ye are turned back from the error of your ways to Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, (Heb. xiii. 20.) and kind observer, visitor, and inspector, or overseer of your precious and immortal souls, that he, taking a tender care of you as his charge, may feed and nourish, guide and govern, heal and defend you from all evil, and conduct you safe to glory.

RECOLLECTIONS.

No mother's milk can be more eagerly desired, or better relished by hungry infants than the pure unadulterated word of God is by new born souls, for their spiritual nourishment, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. And O how precious is Christ to them, who as living stones are built upon him as their living foundation, which God has chosen, and laid with high approbation in his church. They shall never be ashamed of their faith and hope in him, and profession of him, how much soever others may despise, reject, and stumble at him to their own destruction, through the wilful disobedience to which God justly determined to leave them, and for which to punish them. But how great are the privileges and bless-

ings of true believers! Though they were once strangers to God, and wandering in the paths that take hold on hell, they have now found mercy with him, who has chosen and called them out of miserable darkness into astonishing and joyful light; and has made them a holy and peculiar people, yea, kings and priests, to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God with acceptance through Jesus Christ. He has bore their sins on the cross, and taken them away by the sacrifice of himself; has healed their spiritual maladies by being wounded for them; and has reduced them to himself by his grace, that they may be under his inspection and care, as the great Shepherd and overseer of their souls. How strong and endearing then are their obligations and encouragements to be continually coming by faith to him; to abandon all malignant thoughts and words, and all sensual appetites that war against the purity, peace, and happiness of the soul; to behave as pilgrims and strangers on the earth; to die to sin, and live to righteousness; and to order the whole of their conversation in such an honourable manner, as may silence gainsayers, and recommend religion to them, and be the means of inducing them to glorify God, when he shall visit them with his grace! How should this laudable behaviour run through all relations of life, upon principles of conscience, and for Christ's sake, that the liberty, wherewith he has made his disciples free, may not be turned into a cloak for licentiousness! They ought to be dutifully subject to the laws of civil government, and to supreme and subordinate rulers, who are appointed of God for the preservation of liberty and property, and of the public peace, by suitable rewards and punishments. Due respect should be shown to all ranks of mankind, and especially to Christian brethren, in the fear of the Lord. And servants particularly ought to be obedient in all lawful things to their masters of every character, and to be careful that they never be guilty of any fault to bring them under corrections, which would turn to their own shame. But if, through the morose and wicked tempers of their masters, they be scourged for righteousness sake, and patiently endure it; This, as to themselves, is acceptable to God, and what they, as Christians, are called to. And O what a complete and animating example of well-doing, and of patience in sufferings, has our crucified Lord set them, and all of us who believe in him, that we might tread in his steps! He was entirely sinless, free from all deceit; and never returned opprobrious language, or impatient threats, for the most infamous and cruel abuses; but left himself and his cause with God, trusting in him for all events. And how should we be excited to bear our sorest trials with a like meek and humble spirit, since our iniquities have deserved them at the hand of God, if not of men; and since, by the sufferings of Christ in our stead, the principal end of which was to make atonement for sin, our spiritual wounds are healed, which are every way worse than any that can be made upon our bodies by the utmost severity of men!

C H A P. III.

The apostle proceeds to recommend the duties of wives and husbands, 1,—7. Exhorts all Christians to mutual agreement in principle, affection, and kindness, 8,—13. And encourages them to patience under persecutions for righteousness sake, in consideration of Christ's having patiently suffered in their stead, and of the rich advantage they have thereby, 14,—22.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

LIKEWISE, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by

HAVING dispatched what relates to the duties of Christian subjects and servants, let us in like manner go on to those of the conjugal relation, beginning with what is incumbent upon believing wives; and to such I must say, whatever difference there be, as to religion, between you and your lawful husbands, whom ye may have married before ye yourselves were

by the conversion of the wives,

converted, ye ought to behave with an obliging and affectionate submission to them in all reasonable things of a temporal concern, to the end that, if any of them pay no regard to the word of God, which is the ordinary means of conversion, they, though not attending on its ministrations, may be allured and gained over to a good esteem of it, and of Christ and his ways according to it, by the manifest appearance of its powerful influence to produce an exemplary, meek and humble, sweet and engaging temper and carriage in those of you who are wives; ye ought, I say, thus to behave, in hope that this, by the blessing of God, may be the means of bringing them under the hearing of the word, and so of saving their souls. (1 Cor. vii. 16.)

2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

2 While they are daily eye-witnesses of, and observe and reflect upon, the purity, sobriety, chastity, and modesty of all your deportment with due respect to them, and fear of offending them; and as doing every thing in the fear of God, with a religious reverence of him, and in obedience to his commands.

3 Whole adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel:

3 Let it be the study and endeavour of such godly women to recommend themselves and their Christian profession to their husbands, not by the external ornaments of dress, which (how lawful soever in itself according to their stations) too many of that sex are apt to pride themselves in, as though it were their chief adorning; such as putting their hair into fine plaits and curls; and wearing gold-rings, bracelets, or chains; or garments embroidered with gold; or decking themselves with any such sort of rich and splendid attire, as lewd and light women use, for tempting and ensnaring the hearts of the unwary. (See the note on 1 Tim. ii. 9.)

4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

4 But let it be their principal care, in preference to all other ways of women's setting themselves off, to excel in the inward adornings of knowledge, virtue and truth, grace and holiness, which, like the new man, (Eph. iv. 24.) is seated in the heart, and is the finest dress of the soul, that makes it *all glorious within*; (Psal. xlv. 13.) and, though concealed from outward observation, as it lies in the heart, is discovered by its lovely fruits in the life; and is both durable, and proof against temptations to corrupt it, and incomparably more beautiful, and excellent, and advantageous to the immortal soul, than all the fading, uncertain, perishing, and ensnaring pomp and gaiety of outward apparel can be to the mean, frail, and mortal body; and consists, among other things, of a modest, humble, and gentle, calm, tractable, and peaceable temper of spirit, free from pride and turbulent passions;

passions: How much soever this may be despised, and the deckings of the body be preferred before it, by vain minds, it is of high account with God, and ought to be the ambition of women that would approve themselves to him, in imitation of the meek and humble Jesus, (*Mat. xi. 29.*) and as always under God's all-seeing eye.

5 For this is the way that holy and religious women took, in former ages, to ingratiate themselves with their husbands, even in the most ancient times, when they had less advantages than there now are, to understand, and excite them to their duty: They, whose hope and trust were in the Lord for all the blessings of this life, and of that which is to come, put on those inward adornings, and recommended and approved themselves, after this endearing manner, to their own proper husbands, in modest reverence and subjection to them;

6 Even as *Sarah*, the beloved wife of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, hearkened and paid a becoming obedience to him, in token of which she, with a respectful deference, styled him *her lord*: (*Gen. xviii. 12.*) And as ye are her natural offspring; so ye are and will appear to be her genuine children, in the moral and spiritual sense, by a laudable imitation of her in faith and holiness; while, after her example, ye behave well, and chearfully discharge your conjugal duty toward your husbands, without being terrified with fears of their, or any other person's displeasure, on account of your religion, or of their not being mollified in their temper toward you by your winning carriage toward them; and without such unbelieving confusion, as seized *Sarah*, when the Lord spake of her having a son. (*Gen. xviii. 9.—15.*)

7 It is also needful to exhort those of you who are believing husbands, that, on your part, ye take care to cohabit and associate on all occasions in a faithful and friendly manner with your wives, and treat them with decency, kindness, and good humour, according to the rules of prudence, and that superior knowledge, which ye are supposed to have, by the gospel-revelation, of the duty ye owe to them. Ye ought to pay high respect to the woman, who stands in this nearest of all relations to you, by delighting in her, consulting her comfort and happiness, supporting her credit and authority in the family, providing honourably for her, putting due confidence in her, and never using her like a slave, but as a help-meet of great importance to you, who have your own infirmities to be borne with by her; though she, being of a delicate, weak, and tender frame, may be more liable to other

other infirmities of body or mind, that call for your compassion toward her, and your bearing with her. And ye ought to be the rather induced to this, as considering that, in case she be a Christian, she, in spiritual concerns, is upon a level with you; ye being jointly heirs alike of all heavenly happiness, which is the best of life, and the gift of God's free grace, equally to you both; and that, if she be an unbeliever, your behaviour toward her ought to be in such an endearing manner, as, by the blessing of God, shall win her over to the faith of Christ, that she, through the riches of divine grace, may be an heir with you of eternal glory; and so may not be sowed in her temper, and prejudiced against joining with you, morning and evening, in family-prayer; and that important duty may neither be neglected, nor uncomfortably and unprofitably performed; nor your spirits be put out of frame for a due discharge of it; nor any of your prayers, whether social or secret, may be prevented, or defeated, through your morose, imperious, and unchristian temper and behaviour toward her.

8 Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

8 In fine, as to the duties which equally concern you all in every situation of life, as believers in Christ, labour to cultivate a mutual agreement in the great doctrines and duties of the gospel, and a harmonious temper, feelingly sympathizing (*sympatizantes*) one with another in all afflictions; maintain and exercise an affectionate brotherly spirit in disposition, thought, word, and deed, towards each other, as becomes children of the same heavenly Father; shew the tenderest bowels of compassion to those that labour under weaknesses, infirmities, or troubles of any kind, whether spiritual or temporal; and let all your carriage one towards another, and towards all men, be affable, friendly, and engaging, (*φιλοφρονως*) to recommend religion to all around you, by shewing what a sweet influence it has upon your hearts and behaviour.

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

9 Never suffer yourselves to meditate revenge by doing an ill turn to those that have injured you; nor ever revile those that have reviled you; remembering what a noble example of this sort Christ has set for your imitation: (*chap. ii. 23.*) But on the contrary, see that ye, like him, and in obedience to his command, (*Matth. v. 4. and Luke xxiii. 34.*) pray for blessings to those who curse you, and despitefully use you; knowing that ye, as Christians, are called by divine grace, and obliged by the example and authority of Christ, to give into this amiable temper and behaviour, to the end that (*scilicet*) ye, as the children of God and of his own likeness, may inherit, in tempo-

rales and spirituals, whatever shall be a blessing to you in this life, as well as everlasting bliss and glory in that which is to come.

10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

10 For even as to this present world, whoever he be that is desirous of enjoying life with comfort, and seeing many days of prosperity and peace upon earth; his best way for attaining this end, is to fall in with the divine directions of the following purport, (*Pf. xxxiv. 12,—16.*) Let him bridle his tongue, and cease from all profane and filthy speaking, and from all opprobrious language; and keep the door of his lips from uttering falsehood, or deceit of any kind.

11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

11 Let him have an abhorrence of, and carefully avoid every thing that is sinful in itself, or prejudicial to others; and practise every thing that is in its own nature good, and beneficial to all whom he has to do with; let him seek the things that make for peace, and do what in him lies, consistent with a good conscience, to promote it in all civil and religious societies; in his family, among his neighbours, friends, and enemies, and between himself and them; and let him studiously and steadily follow after this extensive peace by all prudent and honourable means, and earnestly pursue it when it seems to flee from him, that, through the divine favour, he may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty in this world, till he arrive at the glory of a better. (*See Matth. v. 9. and Jam. iii. 18.*)

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their sayings; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

12 For the great Lord of all, whose eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong on behalf of them that fear him, and whose kingdom rules over all, (*2 Chron. xvi. 9. and Pl. ciii. 19.*) takes special notice of, bears a peculiar affection to, and exercises a kind and watchful care in his providence over those that are righteous in his sight through Jesus Christ, and are upright in their hearts and lives; and he is graciously attentive, like one who listens with an open ear, to the voice of their supplications, that are offered up with humility, faith, and fervour, for help against their oppressive enemies, and for shewing them seasonable mercy of a temporal as well as spiritual nature, according to what he sees to be best for them. But the indignation of the Lord, like that which appears in the stern, angry, and wrathful countenance of a powerful and provoked enemy, is utterly averse to, and burns against all evil-doers, as a detestable generation, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. (*Psal. xxxiv. 16.*)

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of the

13 And as the Lord bears these contrary dispositions toward the righteous and the wicked, which are all in his hands, and under his dominion, where is the creature,

lowers of that
which is good?

creature, whether man or devil, that shall be permitted to destroy your truest happiness, or work your ruin, or bring any greater hardships upon you than ye shall be enabled to bear, and triumph over with honour and advantage, if, in an entire dependence on him, and devotedness to him, ye be imitators (*ἡμεῖς ἀποδοῦναι μισθῶν*) of God in his goodness and holiness, or of any one who, from a conscience toward God, doth that which is benevolent and acceptable to him? This will keep you out of harm's way, and ye will be safe under his care. And what monster of human nature can be supposed so very wicked and cruel, as to seek the hurt of such an inoffensive and beneficent neighbour?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye; and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

14 But if, after all, the providence of God should suffer you to come under the severities and reproaches of malignant adversaries, on account of your righteous and religious character, as professors of Christ and his gospel; ye are nevertheless exceeding happy in his favour and love under such outward calamities: And ye ought not to be terrified at their threatenings, or at the worst they can do against you; nor be filled with discouragement, consternation, and confusion in your own minds, as though they would turn to your real disgrace and ruin.

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear:

15 But still keep up high and honourable thoughts of the Lord Jehovah, with a holy reverential fear of him, (*Isa. viii. 12, 13.*) and with an entire trust, in his infinite wisdom, power, mercy, and faithfulness for your security, and for ordering all events to your everlasting honour and joy: (*Maub. v. 10.*)—12. And, with this dependence upon him, stand prepared at all times to make your apology (*ἀπολογία*) by word and deed, in defence of your Christian faith and confidence, to every one, who, either in a court of judicature, or in familiar conversation, or with a religious intent for his own or other Christians satisfaction, desires a reasonable account of the grounds of your hopes of salvation according to the gospel, for which ye willingly suffer: And let this be done with a meek and modest air, temper of spirit, and manner of expression; and with a serious gravity and humble reverence of God, and jealousy over yourselves, lest ye offend him by behaving in any way dishonourable to him, by concealing the truth, or saying any thing contrary to it; as also with a cautious fear of offending any persons by speaking disrespectfully to them, whether magistrates or others, who may insist on such an account.

16 Having a good conscience; that

16 Herein exercising yourselves, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and man;

(Act

that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be assured that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

17 For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

19 For, in the case of sufferings without any faults of your own to deserve them, ye are only conformed to the image of your Lord and Saviour; and may well bear them patiently after his example, and for his sake; when ye consider that he, though perfectly holy and righteous, without the least iniquity in heart or life to deserve any ill usage, underwent the most ignominious and agonizing sufferings for the sins of others to expiate them; which he did, not by repeated offerings, like the legal sacrifices, but once for all, as, through the infinite dignity and perfection of his sacrifice, he made complete atonement at once. (Heb. vii. 27. and ix. 26, 28.) He, the just and holy One, suffered all the punishment due to sin in the room and stead of unrighteous and ungodly sinners, that he might reconcile such as we are to God, (Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.) and bring us to a holy communion with him; conformity and obedience to him here, and an everlasting enjoyment of him hereafter; he having been crucified and slain for us in the body of his flesh, which he had assumed into personal union with himself; and which he raised again to an immortal life of blessedness and glory by his own divine power, * together

(Acts xxiv. 16.) and, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, (1 Tim. iii. 9.) that can reflect with satisfaction and peace on whatever ye say or do; to the end that, with respect to those things in which your enemies charge and upbraid you, as a mischievous wicked sort of people, who work iniquity, foment sedition, and are injurious to society and the public welfare, they may be effectually confuted, and forced with shame to retract their slanders, who are reproachfully and maliciously traducing (*καταλαλῶντες*) your blameless, humble, and benevolent life and conversation, which ye lead to the honour of Christ, through faith in him, and by virtue derived from him.

17 For it undoubtedly is every way more eligible, honourable, and advantageous, and ye will have the nobler support and satisfaction in your own souls, if it please God, in his providence, to permit outward tribulations to befall you, merely on account of your acquitting yourselves well to him, and to your own consciences, in doing what is good and right, and acceptable to him, than they could be, were they to be brought upon you for any crimes or follies of your own, which would add a terrible sting to them, and make them an insupportable burden, that would otherwise have sat easy upon you.

18 For, in the case of sufferings without any faults of your own to deserve them, ye are only conformed to the image of your Lord and Saviour; and may well bear them patiently after his example, and for his sake; when ye consider that he, though perfectly holy and righteous, without the least iniquity in heart or life to deserve any ill usage, underwent the most ignominious and agonizing sufferings for the sins of others to expiate them; which he did, not by repeated offerings, like the legal sacrifices, but once for all, as, through the infinite dignity and perfection of his sacrifice, he made complete atonement at once. (Heb. vii. 27. and ix. 26, 28.) He, the just and holy One, suffered all the punishment due to sin in the room and stead of unrighteous and ungodly sinners, that he might reconcile such as we are to God, (Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.) and bring us to a holy communion with him; conformity and obedience to him here, and an everlasting enjoyment of him hereafter; he having been crucified and slain for us in the body of his flesh, which he had assumed into personal union with himself; and which he raised again to an immortal life of blessedness and glory by his own divine power, * together

NOTE

* By the Spirit some understand Christ's divine nature, and others the Holy Spirit.

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison :

20 Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.

gether with the inseparable quickening agency of the Holy Spirit.

19 By which Spirit, as then existing, and acting together with, and from him, he, going in a way of special operation and manifestation to the old world before the flood, preached repentance and reformation, and the righteousness of faith* by the ministry of Noah, by whom he preached to that wicked people, who then lived upon earth, but whose souls are now shut up in the prison of hell, there to abide for ever, for their provoking iniquities. (Matth. v. 25, 26. and 2 Pet. ii. 4, 5.)

20 Who formerly disbelieved, rebelled against, and obstinately refused to obey the solemn admonitions, which that preacher of righteousness gave them; and would not attend to, and comply with those stirrings of the Spirit with them therein, which, through the patience and long forbearance of God's mercy, were continued to them for the space of an hundred and twenty years, (Gen. vi. 3.) while Noah, being warned of God, and believing what he had told him about the destruction of that wicked generation, (Heb. xi. 7.) was preparing materials, and putting them together to make the ark, which was likewise a practical sermon to them all along, till the time that the flood came upon them; in which ark, that eminent type of Christ, a very small number of believers, even Noah, his wife, and three sons and their wives, to the amount of eight persons only, escaped the impending destruction from, and were saved out of the water, which lifted up the ark upon its surface, while all the rest of that ungodly world were swallowed up in the deluge, as all impenitent and unbelieving sinners will be in the more dreadful floods of divine wrath at the last day.

21 Answerable

NOTES.

rit, the last of which seems to me to be most directly intended, if compared with Gen. vi. 3. which the two following verses here, I think, refer to. However, as I would not positively determine against the former sense, both are included in the paraphrase, that the reader may take his choice.

* Noah may well be supposed to have preached, among other things, the righteousness of faith in the Messiah, for justification; since the ark, which he was preparing for the safety of himself and family, was a significant type of salvation by Jesus Christ; and Noah is called a preacher of righteousness, (2 Pet. ii. 5.) and is said to have been an heir

of the righteousness of faith. (Heb. xi. 7.)

† I am inclined to think, with Mr. Pyle, that by water (*di' udatos*) may be more naturally understood to mean from or out of the water, according to a like sense, in which the preposition (*dia*) is to be taken in 1 Cor. iii. 15. which speaks of being saved so as by fire. (*dia puris*). And so it was the ark, and the safety of those which were in it, and not the water, that prefigured the gospel salvation in Christ, as signified by baptism, by means of which, when the thing signified by it is found in us, through faith in him, we are saved, as the apostle explains it in the next verse.

21. The like figure, whereunto, *even* baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

21 Answerable to this temporal salvation in the ark from the flood, by means of the waters bearing it up, we now have salvation in Christ from sin and wrath, by means of the gospel-ordinance of baptism, which in a sense may be called its antitype: (*analogia*) Not that a bare external administration of it, in applying water to the body, as though *that* were to wash away its defilement, is of any avail of itself for this spiritual purpose; but all its efficacy lies in what is signified by it, as the purification of the heart was by circumcision in the flesh; and as it is a solemn obligation upon conscience to return a suitable answer to its demands of obedience to God, we having been therein devoted to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose name, as the one and only true God, we were baptized: (*Matth. xxviii. 19.*) And we are made partakers of this salvation, and thus stipulate to God, according to our baptismal engagements, through faith in the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as he *was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification*; (*Rom. iv. 25.*) as also for quickening us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness in this world, (*Rom. vi. 3,—6.*) and raising us up, soul and body, to eternal life in the world to come, that we may live in glory with him.

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him.

22 Who, as the pledge, earnest, evidence, and security of it, and as our forerunner, is ascended in his risen body to heaven; and is now enthroned with the most eminent dignity and honour at the right hand of the Majesty on high; (see the note on *Acts vii. 55.*) and is invested with all authority in heaven and earth; the good and evil angels of every rank, and all the rulers and potentates of this world, being placed in an absolute subjection to him, that he may order and govern, commission or restrain them, and make them one way or other subserve his own and his Father's glory, and the good of his people, as he is *head over all things to the church.* (*Eph. i. 21, 22.*)

RECollections.

When believing wives, like *Sarah*, *Abraham's* consort, are clothed with, and more solicitous about the inward ornaments of the never-fading charms of modesty, meekness, and humility, from a principle of trust in God, than about the deckings of rich and splendid attire; and when they pay a respectful subjection to their own husbands in all lawful things, how amiable is their character! How acceptable to God, and winning upon even such husbands as disregard his word! And with what honour, humanity, and tenderness, under all their infirmities, should believing husbands treat them, that they may live together as co-heirs of the grace of life, and their prayers may not be hindered! — *Personal* as well as *relative* duties are incumbent on all the disciples of Jesus. They should be as harmonious, as possible, in important sentiment, and mutual affection; and should be compassionate, kind, and courteous towards all men; never retaliating injuries, or opprobrious language,

but rather wishing all good even to those who use them ill, as knowing that this is a duty to which they are called, in order to their own inheriting a blessing. And O how necessary is it for their present peace and comfort, to refrain from all evil in word and deed, and to pursue the good of others, and the things that make for peace? Who can find in his heart to hurt such an inoffensive, generous, and benevolent Christian, or can compass his eternal ruin? There is a natural tendency in his engaging behaviour to make his passage easy through this world; and God himself has a special care of him to guard him from mischief, and shew him favour; and to hear his cries in distress, and pour confusion upon his enemies. If he suffers for righteousness sake, he need not be terrified at what his persecutors can threaten, or do against him; but should be ready to give an account, with modesty and reverence, of the grounds of his Christian hope, on all proper occasions; and ought to display its happy influence upon him, in constantly maintaining a good conscience and holy conversation, by the grace of God, to the silencing and shaming of all that would invidiously slander him. And O how much better is it to suffer in a good, than in a bad cause! And how cheerfully should believers submit to the greatest hardships, that, by divine permission, may befall them! To animate them hereunto, Let them consider that the holy Jesus willingly suffered in his human nature the most terrible death of the cross in their room and stead, to make atonement for their sins, and bring them to God and glory; and that he was raised again by the Divine Spirit, and is now exalted at the Father's right hand in heaven, with full authority over all angels, men and devils, and every rank of creatures, to restrain or employ them as may be most for the security and happiness of his people. And O how great is his salvation, which is signified by the ordinance of baptism! But it really belongs only to those, whose hearts, as purified by faith, correspond to the meaning and obligation of that sacred sign, is a sort of antitype to that which Noah and his family had in the ark. Disobedient sinners shall indeed perish, like the ungodly world, with whom Christ strove by his Spirit in the warnings that were given them by Noah's ministry, with all long-suffering for an hundred and twenty years together, who now, for their impenitence and unbelief, are shut up in an eternal hell, as the most doleful of all prisons: But they who believe in the risen Saviour, be they fewer or more, shall, by virtue derived from him, be raised to a blissful immortality, and dwell with him for ever in heaven. O what a sweet support and comfort are these thoughts to all suffering saints under the heaviest tribulations, which they may be called to endure for his sake!

C H A P. IV.

The apostle improves the consideration of Christian sufferings, for purity and holiness in heart and life, 1,—6. and of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state, for sobriety, watchfulness, prayer, and mutual love, and for a faithful discharge of religious trusts, 7,—11. and cautions believers against exposing themselves to punishments for their own faults; but encourages them to rejoice and glory in reproaches and sufferings for Christ, instead of being surprised or dismayed at them; and to commit their souls, in a course of well-doing, to the care of a faithful God, 12,—19.

TEXT.

FORasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath

PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to return from the digression about Christ's preaching in the ministry of Noah, &c. (*chap. iii. 19,—22.*) Since the immaculate Jesus has so patiently and extremely suffered in his body for us, who believe in him, that he might expiate our sins, (*chap. iii. 18.*) and now no longer bears them, as he did before, (*chap. ii. 24.*) Let this fortify you against im-

patience

hath ceased from sin, and is now a new creature, that ye may be armed against them by a holy submission and intrepidity of spirit, after his noble and endearing example: For whoever has crucified the old man, the body of sin, or the flesh with its affections and lusts, according to the design, and in virtue of the death of Christ, (*Rom. vi. 6. and Gal. v. 24.*) * and has willingly and patiently suffered fiery trials for his sake, and in conformity to him, (*ver. 12, 13.*) in his mortal body; such a Christian has renounced all his former sinful principles and practices, is crucified to them, utterly disallows and abhors them, and with full purpose of heart has departed from them;

2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

2 That he may no longer go on, as formerly, to spend the remainder of his days in the body at an ungodly and immoral rate, in a course of life that is agreeable to the corrupt affections and desires of carnal men, but in all holy dispositions, designs, and conversation, according to the will and command of God, as may be most for his glory, and well-pleasing in his sight.

3. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.

3 For we have too long wasted the precious hours of life already, and ought to think it more than enough, that we have employed them in compliances with the wicked inclinations and practices of our heathen neighbours, to whom we, and especially the Gentile-converts amongst us, conformed ourselves; when in our state of unregeneracy, we indulged, and persisted in wanton dalliances, as expressed by our looks, words, and gestures; in criminal propensions and pursuits after unlawful embraces; in immoderate drinking of wine, or other strong liquors; in gormandizings (*Kαμαίσις*) and riotings; in luxurious carousings; and in idolatrous worship, which is not only unlawful and detestable in itself, but also on account of the shameful lewdness, gluttony, drunkenness, and other vices that attended it, particularly among the heathens:

4. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

4 With respect to which, they wonder what is come to you, that ye have now so unexpectedly forsaken their company, and do not still run along with them into the same dissolute and profuse indulgences to all manner of luxury and intemperance, as ye were wont, and they continue to do with guilty pleasure, and without remorse: And hereupon they vilify you and your religion, as though it has made you the most

N O T E.

* As the flesh is sometimes taken, in a literal sense, for the body; and at others, in a figurative sense, for the corruption of human nature, (see the note on *Gal. v. 19.*) He that has suffered in the flesh, may be considered in either of those views, as in the paraphrase; one or other of which seems more natural to me than any that I have met with.

most unsociable, stiff, precise, and humourfome creatures, that are not fit for common society, and ought to be the objects of their contempt and scorn.

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

5 Who, whatever they think of the matter now, shall most certainly be called to a strict account for all *their ungodly deeds and hard speeches*; (Jude, ver. 15.) and must answer for them to that great Lord, on whom all their reproaches of you for his sake ultimately fall; and who has all authority, and will ere long appear, to pass and execute a decisive sentence upon the whole world, even upon all that shall be living on the earth, and that shall be found among the dead and raised again, at the last day, to the joy of the saints and terror of his enemies. (*John v. 27.—29.*)

6 For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

6 For this is the end for which the gospel was preached to those believers, who are now *the dead in Christ*, (1 Theff. iv. 16.) as well as to those who are still living upon earth, that they, by a divine power attending it, being thoroughly mortified and dead to their former sinful inclinations and courses of life, might be eventually censured and condemned, and even put to death, for their novel and unsociable principles and behaviour, as being judged according to the dictates of corrupt nature, and of mere natural men; but that they might really live after a spiritual and joyful manner, by a holy conformity to the image and will of God in their renewed souls, as being quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and assisted by his Spirit, to do the things that are pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ; and might at last be raised up to a glorious and immortal life, *by his Spirit that dwells in them*. (Rom. viii. 11.)

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

7 But consider, for your encouragement and caution under present and future trials, that all the scenes, which lie before you in this world, will soon be over and gone: The *Jewish* state and nation, temple, city and worship, will quickly come to their final period, according to our blessed Lord's prediction; (*Luke xix. 43, 44.*) the death of every one of you is near at hand; yea, and in comparison with eternity, the day is drawing on apace, when the earth and all things in it shall be dissolved. (2 Pet. iii. 10, 11.) It therefore greatly behoves you, in this view and prospect, to be wise, sober, and temperate in all things relating to your passions, appetites, and enjoyments; and to be constantly upon your watch against temptations, and all the workings of indwelling corruption, and for all assistances of the Spirit, that ye may be in a right frame for prayer, and may

may readily fall in with all occasional as well as stated seasons of addressing the throne of grace for every needful blessing, and particularly for preservation from sin, and from troubles, or for succour under them, and a sanctified use of them, and deliverance in due time out of them all.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

8 And let it be your governing concern to cultivate a warm, brotherly, and cordial affection one towards another, (*Rom. xii. 9, 10.*) especially in perilous days, as being influenced to it by the superlative love of God in Christ to you: For as he, in the greatness of his love, has freely forgiven and covered all your trespasses, that none of them may be brought into judgment against you; (*Eph. iv. 32.*) so a sincere and ardent love in you towards one another for Christ's sake, and in obedience to his command, will inspire you with a forgiving temper toward your brethren, and hide their numerous failings from your own resentment, that ye may kindly overlook, and be careful to conceal them from, instead of exposing them to others. (*1 Cor. xiii. 4, 7.*)

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

9 As another token of love, be ready to exercise all manner of kindness, and to give all seasonable assistance one towards another, and particularly in entertaining religious strangers, who travel abroad for spreading the gospel, or suffer loss for Christ, or are forced to skulk about, through the violence of the times, or are cast among you by any providence; cheerfully receive, and generously relieve such as these, without reluctance, or thinking much at the expence.

10 As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

10 And as all talents for *public* offices, as well as private capacities of usefulness in the church, are the free gift of God, let every one, that is favoured with them, be careful to employ them, in proportion to what he has received, for the advantage and edification one of another, as persons entrusted with, and accountable to their great Lord and Master for the various gifts and endowments which he has graciously bestowed upon them, that they may manage them with wisdom and faithfulness, like honourable stewards, (*καλοὶ διονόμοι*) for the good of the church, for which he gave them.

11 If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God

11 If any one be called to the office of *preaching*, let him attend to the sacred writings of divine revelation, that he may deliver nothing but what is agreeable to them, and may faithfully declare the mind and will of God, according to them, in such a serious, solemn and reverential, fervent, spiritual and holy manner, as becomes them: If another be called

God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

to the office of a *deacon*, * to collect, take care of, and distribute the church's stock, for the relief of the poor, the maintenance of the ministry, and defraying the necessary expences of divine ordinances, let him attend to his charge with all fidelity, prudence, tenderness, and diligence, according to the ability of body and mind that God has furnished him with, and according to the proportion of contributions and of the cases committed to his care; to the end that all the temporal as well as spiritual affairs of the church may be conducted in such a manner as shall be most for the glory of God, and the magnifying of his great name, with such thanksgivings and praises from the dispensers and receivers of the benefit, as are acceptable to him, through the mediation, merit, and advocacy of Jesus Christ, to whom, and to the Father through him, may all grateful acknowledgments and honours be paid, and universal power, authority, and dominion ascribed, to the endless ages of eternity! In testimony of our earnest desire and joyful assurance of its being so, let us unanimously join our *Amen*.

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

12 My dear suffering brethren, while ye reflect on the imperfection of your present state, and the depravity of mankind, which fills their hearts with enmity to God and godliness, and on our Lord's forewarning you, that in the world ye shall have tribulation, but shall have peace in him, who has overcome the world, (*John* xvi. 33.) ye ought not to be discouraged or surprised at the severest persecutions that can befall you, which, in allusion to the approaching conflagration of *Jerusalem*, may be called fiery trials; and which, as they are designed of God, not to destroy, but to refine you, are like a furnace to try the sincerity of, and purify your graces, and purge away your dross, even all your sin. (*Isa.* i. 25. and xxvii. 9. and xlviii. 10.) I entreat you not to be dismayed at them, as though they were unexpected and uncommon things, and foreign to the methods of God's love to his own dear children; and as though ye were dealt hardly with in being called to suffer them.

13 But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed,

13 But rather reckon upon them, think of them, and stand prepared to meet them, with holy joy; for as much as your Lord and Saviour sympathizes with you in all your afflictions, and counts them his own; (*Mat.* xxv. 40, 45. and *Acts* ix. 4.) and ye therein are

N O T E.

* If any man minister, or deaconise, (*Diakonoi*) seems most immediately to relate to the *deacon's* office, in distinction from that of public preaching; (see the notes on *Acts* vi. 2. and *Rom.* xii. 7.)

though they also may be extended, one to Christian conference, and the other to charitable contributions, in private capacities.

ed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye: for the spirit of glory, and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters.

are made conformable to his sufferings for you, to the end that when he shall appear in all his glory at the last day, ye may rejoice with exultation and triumph in, and together with him. (*Rom. viii. 17. Col. iii. 4. and 2 Tim. ii. 12.*)

14 If ye be upbraided and vilified for your holy profession of Christ's name, and yet take it patiently, and even rejoice in it, this is a blessed token of your union and communion with him, and will, through his merit and grace, turn to your own richest account. For the Spirit of God, who, as a divine person, may well be styled *the Spirit of glory*, as the Father and Son are called *the Father of glory*, and *the Lord of glory*; (*Eph. i. 17. and 1 Cor. ii. 8.* see the note there) they all being undividedly one in nature, as *the God of glory*; (*Pf. xxix. 3. and Acts vii. 2.*) This glorious Spirit therein eminently bears witness to you, and is evidently present, in a way of gracious and influential abode with you, to support and comfort you under all revilings and sufferings, to carry you with honour through them, and bring you off gloriously at the end of them; and to be himself your earnest and pledge of the eternal glory, to which he will conduct you. On the side of your persecuting enemies, Christ and his offices, * as well as the Spirit and his operations, are blasphemed; (*βλασφημῶνται*) and their reproaches of you aim at, and ultimately fall upon him, for whose sake they are cast upon you: But on your side, honour redounds to his glorious name, by your faith and patience, and by your bravely owning and confessing him in your sufferings, and in your praises.

15 But let me caution you to take heed, that none of you bring troubles upon himself for any crimes of his own, which deserve, and would justly expose him to them; as for instance, let none of you render himself obnoxious, not only to the anger of God, but to the lash of the civil government, as chargeable with murderous, or with thievish designs and practices; or as guilty of seditious, or any other injurious and unlawful courses; or as an idle pragmatical person, who neglects his own business, and takes upon him to intrude into, and act the part of a busy inspector, (*ἀλλοτριεπισκοπος*) and governor of the consciences, or secular affairs of other people, that do not belong to him;

N O T E.

* He is evil spoken of, and he is glorified, may, by the construction, refer either to Christ, or to the Spirit, and therefore, the paraphrase turns our thoughts to both; though I most incline to take

it as referring to Christ, who frequently speaks of the reproaches, contempt, hatred and persecutions of his disciples for his sake, as levelled against, and terminating upon himself.

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

him; and to meddle with their concerns, which he has nothing to do with, and has no right to pry into, or interest himself in.

16 But (3.) if any one bear with a Christian spirit the greatest indignities, reproaches and cruelties, merely on account of his profession of Christ, and doing the duties belonging to it, he has no cause, nor ought he to look upon them as a real disgrace, or as what he need be ashamed of: But, on the contrary, he should esteem them as an honour conferred upon him, which he may well glory in, and glorify God for, with a chearful submission to his will, and the disposals of his over-ruling providence, who counts him worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, (Acts v. 41.) and enables him to undergo false imputations, and the sharpest trials, in such a manner, as may be most to the honour and praise of his Lord and Saviour.

17 For the time is just now at hand, when not only the temple, God's ancient habitation at Jerusalem, shall be laid waste, in his righteous judgment, according to Christ's prediction; (Luke xxi. 6.) but his New Testament-church, which was typified by that house of God, and in which he dwells in a more spiritual manner, shall begin to be most remarkably visited with trying dispensations of providence for their correction and amendment, though for the elect's sake those days of tribulation shall be shortened: (Mat. xxiv. 9, 21, 22.) And if such severe discipline begin first of all to be exercised on us, who are the habitation of God through the Spirit, (Eph. ii. 22.) even as his judgments of old began at his sanctuary, (Ezek. ix. 6.) what can be expected, but that his wrath should go forth to the utmost extremity against the wicked and ungodly, who, through their obstinacy and unbelief, disregard and reject the gospel of the ever blessed God, as it soon will, in a most dreadful manner, against the whole body of the refractory Jews?

18 And if, in these perilous times, they who are in a state of favour with God through faith in the righteousness of Christ, and are renewed and sanctified by his Spirit unto holy obedience, shall have a narrow, though sure escape, by the interpositions of divine providence and grace, like persons saved as by fire, (1 Cor. iii. 15.) and like Paul and his company, who scarcely, or with much ado, (μολίς) came at the boat for their preservation; (Acts xvii. 16.) * how dismal must the condition

NOTE.

* The salvation, here spoken of, seems from the whole current of the context to be, mostly at least, of a temporal nature: For the principal design of this chapter is to prepare and fortify believers against the severest sufferings for Christ, and the dreadful calamities that were coming upon the Jewish church and state.

condition of those impenitent and unbelieving sinners be, who persist in their impieties and iniquities, and are out of favour with God, and fit fuel for his wrath? Where can they find any retreat for safety? Where shall they dare to lift up their guilty heads, or be able to appear? Or where can they expect, and where must they be obliged to appear? Their end must certainly be for ever inexpressibly miserable; there can be no hiding-place for them, when God shall come to deal in righteousness with them.

19. Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

19. Upon the whole therefore, in reflection upon these awful events, which carry so much encouragement to you as his people, and so much terror to his and your enemies, let them who endure persecutions and afflictions under the over-ruling providence of God, according to his appointment, and who bear them, by the assistance of his Spirit, in such a manner as is pleasing to him, commit their lives and souls, and all their concerns, for time and eternity, by faith to him, in a course of holy walking with him, and of doing good to friends and enemies, and to all about them; trusting in him through Jesus Christ, as faithful to his promises of safety and happiness in the worst of times, and as the Almighty Creator and Preserver, who is able to perform them.

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How animating is a consideration of the extremity and design of Christ's sufferings to determine us against all compliances with the sensual indulgences of men of carnal minds; and to be conformable to the holy will of God! Do our old companions wonder at, and revile us, for not running any longer, as we were wont, into the same excess of riot with them? Let both parties consider, that every one must give an account of his own behaviour, whether good or bad, to the great Judge of all, who will determine in favour of those that are quickened from spiritual death by means of the gospel, which indeed brings them under the censure of men that judge according to the flesh; but leads them into a life of holiness, according to the will of God, by the power of his Spirit. How should the near approach of tribulations and death excite us to sobriety, watchfulness, and prayer, to all exercises of brotherly love and hospitality, and to a faithful improvement, like good stewards of the manifold gifts and talents, in public or private capacities, which God in his free favour has given us, that they may be employed to his glory through Jesus Christ! Let Christians take heed that they never bring sufferings on themselves, by their own sinful and injurious behaviour; or by prying and intruding like busy-bodies, into other people's affairs, instead of minding their own. But as we, who would cleave unto the Lord, may expect to meet with fiery trials for his sake, we ought not to be surprized, or affrighted at them; but should rather re-

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joice

N O T E.

state at the conflagration of *Jerusalem*, which it is supposed was then within about six or seven years at hand; and, in allusion to which, the calamities of those days are called *fiery trials*, and *the end of all things* is said to be *at hand*. (ver. 7, 12.) But if we make it refer to a *spiritual and eternal salvation*, it is to

be understood only of the extreme difficulties, troubles, sufferings, and apparent dangers, through which the righteous were to pass in their way to heaven, and not of any real hazard, as to the event, with respect to the purpose, promise and power of God for accomplishing

joyce and glory in them, as an honour put upon us, while we are called and enabled to glorify him, by bearing them in an honourable manner, through the Spirit of glory's resting upon us, and making us conformable to Christ in his sufferings, that we may triumph with exceeding joy, when he shall appear in all his glory, and we shall be glorified together with him. But if the righteous themselves must pass through great tribulations, for their correction and amendment, and God begin first in an awful manner with them, that are his habitation through the Spirit, and they narrowly escape out of imminent dangers, how dreadful must the case of the sinner and ungodly be, who rejects the gospel through unbelief! And where can they appear with safety and comfort? Their ruin must be unavoidable and insupportable. As ever therefore we would not perish with them, may we, in a way of well-doing, commit our lives and souls by faith, under all afflictions, to the care of that God, who is faithful to his promises, and is able to save his creatures, and to perform all things for them that trust in him.

C H A P. V.

The apostle exhorts and encourages elders to be chearful, disinterested and humble, in a faithful discharge of their office, 1,—4. Directs younger Christians to submit to their elders, yea, all of them one to another; and to yield, with humility and patience, to the band of God, and cast all their care on him, and to be sober, watchful, and stedfast in the faith against all the temptations of the devil, 5,—9. And then prays for their growth and establishment; and concludes with salutations, and a benediction, 10,—14.

TEXT.

THE elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

PARAPHRASE.

AS to those that are spiritual guides or pastors, chosen out of, and residing in your several churches, and may be called *elders*, because ministers of mature age and standing are ordinarily the most proper to be put into that sacred office; I would direct my exhortation to such, and equally bind it upon my own conscience, as being myself not a lord and master, but a fellow-elder and servant of Christ, though honoured with the apostolic character: (*2 Epist. i. 1.*) And that they may pay the greater regard to what I am going to urge upon them, let them consider that I was an eye-witness of the bitter agonies and sufferings of Christ in soul and body, (*Mark xiv. 33, &c. and 54, &c.*) and of their glorious issues in his resurrection from the dead; (*Acts iii. 15.*) and am now bold to bear my testimony to them, and to their important design, by preaching, and by all manner of sufferings for his sake, and after his example, even at the per-

NOTE.

* This way of the apostle *Peter's* address, saying, *I exhort or entreat, who am also a fellow-elder*, (*κατακαὶ οὐ νεώτερος εἰμι*) is quite different from the high tone of the *Pope*, who, under pretence of being *Peter's* successor, and

head of the church, commands with sovereign authority, like a lord, and not a fellow-elder, which all the apostles were with other elders, though every elder was not an apostle.

peril of my life: And as his sufferings turn to my account, so I have an earnest of, and (as I am well assured) shall be admitted to a blessed communion with him in the glory which he has purchased by his death, and taken possession of, as my head, representative, and forerunner; and which will be openly and fully manifested at his second appearing, when *he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* (2 Thess. i. 10.)

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

2 Let those of you who are set over the several churches in the Lord, to which ye are related, see to it, that, as *pastors after his own heart, ye feed his people with knowledge and understanding,* (Jer. iii. 15.) even his lambs and his sheep, (John xxi. 15, 16.) and that (*ποιμαννῆς*) ye exercise a holy discipline, according to his word, in governing the church of God, which he, in his incarnate state, purchased with his own blood, (Acts xx. 28.) and has committed, as his flock, to your pastoral care under him, as *the chief Shepherd:* (ver. 4.) Act the part of good bishops * in personally inspecting their principles, temper, and conduct, and in looking after all their spiritual concerns with wisdom and meekness, fidelity, watchfulness and care; and let this be done, not by any force upon your inclinations, or by fear of shame among men, in case of neglect, but with freedom and delight, as matter of choice; not, like the false teachers, (Tit. i. 11.) with mercenary views to worldly advantages, which are sordid gains, and defiling to the conscience, and to the sacred office of him who makes them his governing end; but with a heart that is ready to engage in this delightful service, purely for the honour of Christ and the good of souls.

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

3 Nor let your important trust be managed with ambitious views of honour to yourselves, or in an imperious, haughty, domineering manner, as though ye were lords and masters, that have dominion over the faith and consciences of the people of God's choice, whom, like *Israel* of old, (Deut. iv. 20. and ix. 29.) he has made his peculiar inheritance, as it were by lot; and who

N O T E.

* These *elders* were to *bishop* it, (*ἐπισκοπεῖν*) or to exercise the office of *bishops* over the flock; (see the note on Acts xx. 17.) which shews that, though they were only ordinary pastors, they were the Christian *bishops* of the apostolic age, to fulfil all the duties of that office, which is one and the same in those that are spoken of as *pastors* or *elders*, who are to feed and govern the flock, which is called God's *heritage* or *clergy*, (ver.

3.) as distinguished from *pastors*; and these officers are at other times described as *elders*, that are to behave with gravity and prudence, like aged and experienced men; and at others, as *bishops*, that are to take the oversight of the church: And so all these are only different denominations, taken from such like considerations of the same office, to set out the nature and extent of their charge.

who may be considered as *the clergy*, (*τοι κληροι*) which he has set apart for himself, with a distinction from the rest of mankind: But take care to set a good example of humility, self-denial, and all holy conversation and godliness, to the whole company of believers under your charge, that they may be induced to follow your steps. (See 1 Tim. iv. 12.)

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

4 And, for your encouragement hereunto, always bear in mind, that when *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, (Heb. xiii. 20.) who has purchased them by his blood, and secures them by his power and grace, under whom ye act, and to whom ye are accountable, shall appear on the throne of his glory to gather all nations before him, and shall set his sheep at his right-hand, and pronounce them the blessed of his Father, &c. (*Matth. xxv. 31.—34.*) Then ye, who are faithful to your trust, shall receive an infinitely better reward, than all the riches of this world, or than the conqueror's withering garland of bays, olive, and flowers in the *Grecian* games. It shall be more durable and flourishing than (*αμαραντιν*) a crown made of the flowers of *amarinth*, which it is said, never fade; even an immortal crown of honour and glory, which the Lord will graciously award unto you, as an uncorruptible and undefiled inheritance, that never fades or abates in worth or lustre. (*Chap. i. 4.*)

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

5 My exhortation, in like manner, to those of you that are private church-members, consisting mostly of the younger sort of Christians, * as also to inferiors of every character, is, that ye be attentive and submissive to the admonitions, cautions, and reproofs of those that are of more advanced years, wisdom, experience, and station; and particularly to those that are elders by office, as set over you in the Lord; that ye treat these persons, characters, and instructions, as far as they are agreeable to the word of God, with due esteem and reverence: Yea, that all of you, in whatever relation ye stand, behave with decency and respect one towards another. Do not be stiff and abounding in your own sense.

NOTE.

* *Elder* and *younger* are sometimes used to signify persons of different age, as in 1 Tim. v. 1. (see the note there) and at others, *younger* is a denomination of inferiors in distinction from *superiors*, as in Luke xii. 26. But at other times, *elders* is a title of office, the same with *bishops* or *pastors*; and that it is to be so understood, ver. 1. is evident from the work, that the apostle exhorts them to in the following verses, which is peculiar to persons of that character; who also

seem to be principally intended by the *elder* in this verse, which represents the duty of the people toward them, in a beautiful antithesis by the word *likewise* (*ομοιως*) But the *younger*, as far as I find, is never used as a term of office; and that it is not to be taken in any such sense here, appears from there being nothing said to them that relates to office-work, but only such things as are common to them and all private Christians.

sense; but hearken to solid arguments and kind reproofs, from whomsoever they come; and yield one to another, as far as is consistent with your several ranks and situations in the church, and in the natural and civil life: And, to make these duties the more easy and pleasant to you, see that ye be endued with unfeigned humility, and as it were covered all over with it, as a beautiful ornament to add a visible lustre to all your other graces, like a shining upper garment that spreads over all the rest, and hides their defects. And to induce you to cultivate this amiable grace, remember that a haughty spirit is so uncreaturally and unchristian-like, so absolutely unbecoming sinful mortals, and so contrary to your relation to God, and entire dependence upon him, that he sets himself, as it were in battle-array, (*αὐτομαχῶς*) against the proud in heart, and has them in the utmost abhorrence; but (*ὁ*) shews favour, and gives a rich increase of all grace, to humble souls, which are his delight. (See *Prov.* iii. 34. and the paraphrase on *James* iv. 6.)

6 Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that ye may exalt you in due time:

6 Considering therefore what a great God ye have to do with; how entirely ye are at his disposal, and as nothing before him; how able he is to humble the proud, and exalt the lowly in heart; and what terrible judgments he is about to execute in the way of his providence, as an emblem of much greater still in the world to come, yield yourselves up to his almighty power, and his sovereign and holy will, under all the sufferings and afflictions which he orders for your trial: Bow under his rebukes, that he, as a tender father, who has gained his wife and gracious end by his chastenings, may have compassion upon you, and in his time (which is always the fittest) may lift you up above all tribulations, and advance you to a prosperous state in this world, (if that shall be best for you) or, at farthest, to all the honours and delights of the world to come.

7 Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

7 In the mean while, whatever be the distressing burdens, or anxieties, solicitude, fears, and cares, relating to yourselves, or families and friends, or to the cause and interest of Christ, that perplex, cut, and wound your souls, (*παραδίδετε τὰς ψυχὰς*) commit them all, in the use of proper means, by faith and prayer, to the Lord, relying on his power and goodness for seasonable relief: For he has all your concerns, spiritual and temporal, at heart, and will sustain you; (*Psal.* lv. 22.) he will pity, succour, strengthen, and comfort you under, and in his time and way will ease you of, and give a happy issue to all your troubles in your eternal salvation.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

8 Amidst all the difficulties and dangers of your present state of warfare, (*war*) labour to maintain a wakeful and sober temper of mind, in modest thoughts of yourselves, and in moderating your affections and appetites towards earthly enjoyments; and to be watchful unto prayer, (*chap. iv. 7.*) and unto the performance of all the duties of your places, and against temptations that would draw you into sin and apostacy; (*1 Thess. iii. 5.*) because your busy and powerful adversary the devil, that accuser of the brethren, (*Rev. xii. 10.*) like a fierce, savage, and hungry lion, greedy of his prey, is indefatigably restless in his contrivances and endeavours, continually going to and fro in the earth, (*Job i. 7.*) to try how far he may be permitted, by persecutions, frauds, and evil suggestions, to wound, rend, and tear, and ruin immortal souls; though, blessed be God, he, being under Christ's controul, cannot compass his design of destroying all whom he would, or of plucking any one of the Redeemer's sheep out of his and his Father's hands. (*John x. 28, 29.*)

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

9 As ever ye would overcome this grand adversary, and all his instruments, make a noble and courageous stand against him, by stedfastly maintaining the pure doctrine of faith and your holy profession of it, in a firm dependence on the power and grace of Christ to vanquish him; it being most of all important for this purpose to take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked: (*Eph. vi. 16.*) And that ye may not be disheartened in the combat, as though some strange thing happened to you, (*chap. iv. 12.*) remember that the like measure of sufferings, in conformity to Christ, are filled up (*ἐπιπληροῦσαι*) and furnished by your Christian brethren in all parts of the world, during their short abode in it; and as temptation has taken you, but such as is common to man; so God is faithful, who will make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (*1 Cor. x. 13.*)

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

10 Now as God, who is rich in mercy, and of his own mere favour is the fountain and giver of all grace, from first to last, suitable to every time of trial, has effectually called us by his word and Spirit to an inheritance of eternal glory, which he has promised to, and reserved in heaven for us, and will keep us unto the possession of, (*chap. i. 4, 5.*) through the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ; and as his grace is absolutely necessary to enable you to put my admonitions into practice, it is my earnest prayer, under these encouraging and endearing considerations

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considerations of him, and in reflection on my own dreadful fall, when, being left to myself, I denied my Lord; (*Mark* xv. 68, 70, 71.) that after, and by means of your tribulations, which will soon be over, and are but *light affliction for a moment*, compared with the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, (*2 Cor.* iv. 17.) he would perfect all that concerns you, as to knowledge and practice; would establish you immoveably in the faith and hope, profession and holiness of the gospel; would *strengthen you with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*; (*Col.* i. 11.) and would settle your souls, with unshaken peace, safety, and comfort, on that foundation which he has laid in *Sion*. (*Chap.* ii. 6.)

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

11 To him, who is the glorious author of all the happiness that we have in hand, or in hope, and reversion, be cheerfully ascribed, as is most due, all possible honour, majesty, might, and dominion, through all generations on earth, and to all eternity in heaven, *Amen*; so may it be, and so it shall, as well as ought to be.

12 By Silvanus a faithful brother unto you, (as I suppose) I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

12 Thus I have wrote a short epistle, and sent it to you by *Silvanus*, (see the note on *Acts* xv. 22.) whom I can recommend as a faithful brother in the work of the Lord, (*ὁ συνεργός*) as I reckon, upon good grounds, that he is, and will approve himself to be to you: And my design, in what I have wrote, is to exhort and encourage you to abide by the testimony I have herein given for the confirmation of your faith; assuring you that it is the true gospel of the grace of God, relating to salvation alone by Jesus Christ; in the doctrine, belief, and profession of which (*ἐν αὐτῷ*) ye have hitherto stood fast; and by means of which ye still maintain your ground, as I trust ye ever will continue to do, through grace, notwithstanding all the artifices and terrors of your enemies to bring you off from it.

13 The church that is at Babylon, selected together with

13 The believers that are gathered into a church-state, and ordinarily assemble for religious worship at *Babylon*, where I now am, and that are to be looked

N O T E.

* Some suppose that by *Babylon* is meant *Rome*, which in a figurative sense might be called mystical *Babylon*, as in *Rev.* xvii. 5. and xviii. 2. with a view to its future corruption, superstition, idolatry and oppressions under the *papacy*, when it would be as infamous for all abominations, as the ancient *Babylon* ever was. But *Calvin*, *Piscator*, *Pearson*, and many others think, as

I also do, that the apostle could have no reason to conceal *Rome* under this fictitious name, and that he being the apostle of the circumcision was probably at or near *Babylon*, either in *Chaldea*, or in *Egypt*, when he wrote this epistle; there being many converted *Jews* in those parts. (See *Dr. Lightfoot's* sermon on this text in his works, Vol. II. p. 1141, &c.)

with you saluteth
you, and so doth
Marcus my son.

14 Greet ye one
another with a kiss
of charity. Peace
be with you all
that are in Christ
Jesus. Amen.

ed upon in a judgment of charity, as choice Christians, and as chosen of God to salvation together with yourselves, send their most affectionate and religious respects to you; and so doth *John Mark*, (Acts xii. 12.) who, at times, has served with me as a son in the work of the gospel, as well as was converted by my ministry, and is, like a son, exceeding dear to me.

14 See to it that ye cultivate a cordial brotherly love one towards another; in token of which salute each other with a chaste and friendly kiss, according to the usual custom of Christians in their meetings together. (See the note on *Rom. xvi. 16.*) May all the blessings of the Lord, for present and everlasting happiness, abound towards all and every one of you, wheresoever ye be scattered, that bear a holy profession of Christ's name, and are supposed to be vitally united to him, as your only Head and Saviour! To testify my sincere desire and hope of this, I say, *Amen.*

Amen.

RECOLLECTIONS.

With what an exemplary spirit, conversation, and humbleness of mind, free from haughty airs of lordship over God's heritage; and with what diligence, cheerfulness and disinterested views, should Christian pastors inspect, feed, and govern the churches committed to their ministerial care by the great Shepherd of the sheep, who suffered for their redemption! They have the sweetest encouragement to be faithful, in hope of being partakers of, and crowned with glory, when he shall be revealed in all the grandeur of his second appearing. And how dutiful and becoming is it, that humility and respect run through the behaviour of their people to them, of inferiors to superiors, and of all believers, one towards another, in receiving holy admonitions! But especially, how ought every one to behave with an absolute, unreserved, and the lowest submission to the great God under his rebukes! He sets himself against the proud; but shews favour to the humble, and encourages them to cast all their solicitous cares and troubles upon him, who is the almighty God, and has a tender concern for them, and will exalt them in due season. And as the devil is a vigilant, cruel, and indefatigable enemy, like a formidable, ravaging, and hungry lion, seeking, if possible, to devour them, they ought to be constantly on their watch against him, and against all inordinate affections that would betray them into his hands; and to withstand and reject all his temptations, with a stedfast faith in Christ, to bring them off with victory and triumph over all the persecutions and troubles, which they and their brethren, in all places and ages, are exposed to; but which, comparatively speaking, are light afflictions, and of short continuance, and at furthest can be only during their uncertain residence in this present sinful world. But oh what absolute need is there of help from the God of all grace to fortify our souls against them, and to establish, strengthen, and settle us on Christ, our sure foundation, and perfect his good work in us! What a mercy is it to stand fast in the grace of the gospel! And what high aspirations of eternal honour and glory are due to the mighty God, for all his greatness and his kindness to us!—Faithful ministers are to be recommended to the churches, and Christian salutations sent to them; all the members of which should express their cordial love, in the best manner, one towards another: And what better demonstration of the sincerity of it can there be, than heartily to wish and pray for peace, inclusive of every blessing, to all the chosen of God and members of Christ? May they for ever prosper! *Amen.*

A PRAC

A PRACTICAL
E X P O S I T I O N
OF THE
SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE
OF THE
A P O S T L E P E T E R.
IN THE FORM OF A
P A R A P H R A S E.

THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

THIS second Epistle of the apostle *Peter* is most generally supposed to have been wrote in view of his near approaching death, about a year or two after the other, and three or four years before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, to the same persons, and with much the same design, for their further establishment in faith and holiness, and for their caution against apostacy, by means of the fiery trials that attended them, and were still further coming upon them; and by means of corrupt libertine teachers, and profane scoffers at the promise of Christ's coming to judgment, as though, because it was not already, it never would be brought to pass. (See the preface to the first epistle.)

The divine authority of this second epistle of *Peter* is well supported, and defended against the chief objection that some have made to it, on account of difference in *style*, by Dr. *Sherlock*, now bishop of *London*, in his first *dissertation*, annexed to his discourses on *prophecy*.

The apostle, in connection with the inscription and salutation, represents the comprehensive blessings of the gospel, together with the duties incumbent on those that hope, or pretend to be partakers of them; and proves his testimony to Christ by divine revelation, *chap. i.* He then warns them of false teachers, that would arise among them in opposition to it, and describes their abominable principles and practices, and the dreadful vengeance that should be taken on them, while the righteous should escape, *chap. ii.* and shews that, notwithstanding all their perverse cavils against the doctrine of Christ's coming to judgment, of which the conflagration at *Jerusalem* would be a lively type and emblem, he certainly will come in due season, when the present system of this world shall be entirely dissolved by

fire; and a new, refined, and glorious fabric shall be erected for the habitation of the saints: In prospect of all which, they ought to be holy in heart and life, and progressive in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; concluding with an ascription of glory to him, *chap. iii.*

C H A P. I.

The apostle salutes them who had obtained like precious faith, and reminds them of its attending blessings, 1,—4. Exhorts them to add the exercise of various other graces to their faith, and encourages them thereto by the happy issues of their so doing, 5,—11. Assures them of his concern to be as assistant, as possible, to them therein, before his approaching decease, 12,—15. And confirms the truth of the gospel relating to Christ's appearing to judgment, as it may be gathered from an immediate testimony which came from heaven in his own and others bearing, and more directly proved by the inspired writings of the prophets, 16,—21.

TEXT.

SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

PARAPHRASE.

I Who was named *Simon* at my circumcision, and surnamed *Peter* by our blessed Lord, upon my conversion, and confession of faith in him, (*John* i. 42, and *Matth.* xvi. 18.) who called me to be his ministering servant, and honoured me with the apostleship; even I, in his name and by his authority, now send this second epistle to those *Jews* of the dispersion, (see the note on *1 Epist.* i. 1.) who by the sovereign disposals of divine grace, as it were by lot, (*λαχνη*) are made partakers of the faith of God's elect, (*1 Epist.* i. 2. compared with *Tit.* i. 1.) which, though various in degrees, is of the same excellent nature and kind, as to its causes, acts and objects, fruits and benefits, and is of like great price in the sight of God, with that true and unfeigned faith, which we the apostles, who have made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (*ver.* 16.) and which all of us, who believe to the saving of our souls, have obtained, not through any worthiness or ability of our own, but through the merit of that everlasting righteousness, which was wrought out, and brought in, by the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ.

NOTE.

* Through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ (*εξ δικαιοσυνης του Θεου ημων και σωτηρος Ιησου Χριστου*) may be literally rendered in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ; and so is to be understood as descriptive of one and the same person, the

article in the Greek being prefixed only to the first of these titles; (see the note on *Eph.* i. 1.) but in the next verse the article is prefixed to either of them. Accordingly the righteousness here intended is the mediatorial righteousness of Christ, which is often styled the righteousness

who is a divine person and the only mediator, as being both our God and Saviour, who purchased all blessings for us, and on whose behalf it is given unto us to believe on him. (Phil. i. 29.)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2 May all the blessings of grace and peace, of free favour and clear discoveries of it, as the fountain, and prosperity of every kind, as its effect, abound with the richest variety and fulness to all and every one of you, through a believing, experimental, and increasing acquaintance with God, as your reconciled and covenant God and Father in Christ; as also with Jesus himself, and with what he has done, is doing, and will do, as the common Lord and Saviour of every one of us, who believe in him.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

3 I heartily desire that ye may, and trust that ye shall, be thus abundantly blessed; since Jesus Christ our Lord, (ver. 2.) in the greatness of his power, which is truly divine, has already, * in his free favour, bestowed on us all the blessings that he sees best for us, relating to the present life, and especially all that are requisite, for maintaining and improving our spiritual life, till it be perfected in life eternal, and for every exercise of grace in all acts of piety toward God, till it be completed in glory, through the efficacious knowledge and faithful acknowledgment (*δια της πιστεως*) of him, and of the Father through him, who has called us by the gospel to an inheritance of eternal glory, and to a courageous profession of our faith in hope of that inheritance †; and has effectually called us to this by a glorious operation of his mighty power in us.

4 Whereby are given

4 By which divine persons † (ver. 2.) and the glorious

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righteousness of God. (See the note on Rom. i. 17.) But if any would understand the word God to be in this place meant of God the Father, in distinction from our Saviour Jesus Christ, it is nevertheless to be taken for the *righteousness of Christ*; because, according to our translation, it is the *righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ*. And what can this be, through which precious faith is obtained, but that righteousness of Christ which God has accepted, by which his justice is satisfied, and for the sake of which, he gives faith in it unto justification of life? And were we to render the words (*ις δικαιοσυνην*) in the *righteousness of God and our Saviour*, they point us to the righteousness of Christ, as the *object* of faith, or *that*, in which we believe unto righteousness, Rom. x. 10. But as believing in the *object* of faith is ordina-

rily expressed by another preposition (*εἰς*) and never, as far as I find, by *this*, (*ις*) I rather chuse to consider this as signifying *by* or *through*, (*υἰ* pro *δια*) as it frequently doth in other places.

* The participle, (*δεδωκεν*) here rendered *given*, may be considered as of the *middle voice*, which admits of a construction in the *active*, as well as *passive mood*, and takes off the grammatical difficulty of this sentence.

† *To glory and virtue*, (*δια δεξης και αγωγης*) is most strictly speaking, as the margin has it, *by glory and virtue*; and may signify the *glorious power* by which we are called to eternal glory, as the *end*, and to Christian fortitude as the *means* of attaining it.

‡ *Whereby* (*δι' ου*) is plural and refers either to *glory and virtue*, mentioned at the close of the preceding verse,

given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

rious operations of their power, by means of the gospel, are given to us the best of promises, which are eminently *great*, far beyond our utmost conceptions, and much more beyond all our defects; and they are exceedingly prized by true believers, and every way excellent and valuable, grand and noble (*τιμιὰ*) in themselves, as they are entirely free and everlasting promises, ordered in all things and sure; and as they contain the inestimable blessings of life and godliness, pardon and peace, grace and glory, and are admirably suited to every exigence; (*ὥστε*) to the end that by an application and fulfilment of these promises, in all their variety, riches, and extent, ye might have such communion with God (*κοινωνία θεοῦ*) in his holiness, which on account of its resemblance of him, derivation from him, tendency toward him, and complacency in him, may be called a divine nature; * ye having, as an introduction to it, and as a part and evidence of it, renounced and fled away, with vigour and abhorrence, (*ἀποφύγετε*) from all the corrupt principles and practices, that spread and prevail among the men of this world, through the power of their depraved inclinations, and inordinate affections to carnal things.

5 And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;

5 And for this reason, (*καὶ οὖν*) or in consideration of what ye are already partakers of, ye ought to use the utmost care and diligence for a progression in every grace and duty; as for instance, in humble dependence on divine power and promised assistance, (*ver. 3, 4*) add to your precious faith a noble Christian-courage, in its profession and defence; and to

NOTES.

verse, or to God, and Jesus our Lord, at the close of *ver. 2*; and so may be rendered either *by which*, or *by whom*. If we refer it to *glory and virtue*, the meaning may be, that these promises are given to believers by that glorious energy or excellent glory, and efficacious power that attend the gospel: Or if we render it, *by whom*, and refer it to God and Jesus our Lord, it may intimate that these promises are given to us, both by God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, as the promise of the Spirit was, *John xiv. 16, 26.* and *xvi. 7.* and *Acts i. 4.* But were we to follow the reading of *Stephanus*, and one or two others of less note, which puts it in the singular number (*δι' οὗ*) it may refer either to God, or to Jesus our Lord, as the antecedent mentioned *ver. 2.* the nearest of which is Jesus our Lord,

whom, for that reason, I take to be intended in *ver. 3.* according to the phrase upon it.

* *The divine nature* (*θεῖα φύσις*) might have been much better rendered *a divine nature*, the expression in the Greek, being without the article, most naturally carries this sense; and the divine nature, which we are said to be partakers of, is not by a participation of the divine essence, which is incommunicable to any creature; nor is it by a personal union with the divine nature, as the human nature of Christ is; but it is by a divine impression of God's own holy image upon us, or by a holy principle infused into us, which introduces a contrary form to that which we had before by the corruption that is in the world through lust.

your Christian courage, add still further advances in spiritual understanding, wisdom, and prudence.

6 And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;

6 And to this sort of excellent knowledge, add a due regulation and government of your passions and appetites, with a weanedness of heart from the alluring objects of flesh and sense; and to the moderation of your affections to earthly things, add patience under all tribulations, with a meek and quiet spirit, and an entire resignation to the will of your heavenly Father; and to your Christian patience, add all exercises of piety and devotion, in a holy reverence of God, and conscientious attention to every ordinance of divine worship, and all religious duties, according to his word, from a principle of love to him, in obedience to his command, and for his glory.

7 And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.

7 And to your religion toward God, add an affectionate love, tenderness, sympathy, and compassion, with every suitable fruit and expression of them, toward your fellow-Christians, as brethren in the Lord; and to this brotherly kindness, add an universal benevolence to all mankind, as partakers of the same human nature with yourselves, endeavouring to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare, whether they be friends or enemies: (see *Gal. vi. 10.*) These are things of great importance, and will turn to the best account.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8 For if these excellent graces be found in you, and be lively and enlarged in their exercise, they will make you thriving Christians; so that ye will neither be slothful nor inactive (*ἀργοί*) in the concerns of your souls, and in the duties of your Christian profession; nor useless and unprofitable, and, like barren trees, destitute of holy fruits, suitable to the nature of your fiducial knowledge and acknowledgment of Christ, as our only Lord and Saviour; which will make you vigorous, diligent, and abounding in every good word and work, relating to God, yourselves, and others.

9 But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

9 But whatever professor of Christianity he be, that is destitute of the forementioned graces, or so remarkably deficient in them, as to have no experience of their exercise, like what is sensibly present to him, (*ὡς περ νῆστις*) let his pretences to light and knowledge be ever so great, he is still in spiritual darkness, like a blind man, or like one who winks hard, and shuts his eyes against the light; or at most (*μυωμένη*) he has only a glimmering, confused, and short sight, which cannot discover distant objects, nor penetrate into the beauty and glory of gospel-truths, or of Christ and holiness; nor plainly discern the reality and importance of future things, which are as far out of his view, as if he were purblind, though they are made manifest in the word of God, and in the light of

of faith: and will soon be present in all the misery, or happiness of the eternal world: And he has thrown off a sense of the obligations, end, and design of his solemn profession, as signified by his baptism, of being purified from the sins he formerly indulged; and is careless and unconcerned about being cleansed by the blood and Spirit of Christ from the iniquities, which for a great while, even from his birth, had reigned over him. (1/. xlviii. 8.)

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for, if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

10 Considering therefore the wide difference there is between real and nominal Christians, and how many take up with the name, without the thing, let it excite you, my dear brethren, to be the more earnestly careful, in the use of all means of grace, to obtain a full assurance, in the light of the Spirit, of your effectual calling, and thereby of your having been eternally chosen of God to salvation; since your election cannot be known but by its fruits in your calling, which are the first evidence of it, * and from which it may certainly be concluded. See to it then, that this be a firm and settled point with you, by its being manifested in such holy effects, as will be a genuine and undoubted proof of it: For if ye live in the exercise of the graces but now specified, (ver. 5,—7,) whatever trials, slips, and infirmities may attend you, ye shall never stumble so as to fall off from Christ, or apostatize from your faith in him and holy profession of his name; nor ever fall into error or sin to your perdition, or fall short of eternal life.

11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord

11 For while in this way and manner of making out your election by your effectual calling, ye add (*προσθησεται*) to your faith virtue, &c. (ver. 5.) ye shall not only get safe to heaven, but shall have an abundant increase of hope and joy in your way to it; and

N O T E.

* The scripture usually speaks of *election* and *calling* in their proper order, as the first was from eternity, and the other is in time; one the cause, and the other the fruit or effect, according to the account given of them in *Rom. viii. 29, 30. Eph. i. 3,—7. and 2 Thes. ii. 13, 14.* But here the apostle inverts the order, and puts our calling *first*, because his immediate design in this passage was not so much to discourse of the things themselves, as of our knowledge in them, and assurance concerning our own interest in them; and this knowledge can be obtained only in this order, by ascending from the effect to the cause, from our calling to our election; and proving *this by that*: For the elec-

tion of one or another particular person is an entire secret in the heart of God, till it breaks forth, and is made known by its effects. And therefore it is a vain, fruitless, unwarrantable, and preposterous attempt, for any persons to puzzle themselves about *their own election*, before they are *effectually called*, or have evidence in themselves that they are so. But if their *effectual calling* be clearly made out, they may certainly conclude from thence that they were *elected*; since all, and none but the elect are so called: For otherwise their being called could not be a sure proof, that they were elected, which is the very point in the apostle's view.

Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ.

and when ye come to die, a triumphant entrance shall be richly supplied and added to you (*πλουσιως επιχορηγηθησεται*) into all the sublime dignity, affluence, and delights of the eternal kingdom of our great Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he has purchased and taken possession of for us, who are interested in him, and whom he *will receive to himself, that where he is, there we may be also.* (John xiv. 3.)

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

12 As these are things of the greatest consequence, I therefore cannot be unconcerned about reminding you of them, and pressing them upon you, once, and again, in order to your being suitably affected with them, and putting them into practice; though I am well satisfied that ye are already acquainted with them, and confirmed in a belief of the truth of the gospel, according to the present dispensation of it; and particularly of the truth, which I am now recommending to you about the necessity of universal holiness, in order to your joyful entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and which, in this day of trial and affliction, eminently calls for a present attention to it.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance;

13 Yea, so great is its importance, and so nearly are ye concerned in it, that I count it fit and proper, and (*δυνατος*) a piece of justice to truth and you, as long as I continue in the body, (which is like a moveable tent, set up for a little time, and soon to be taken down again) not barely to inform you of these things, which ye may have little or no need of; but earnestly to excite you to consider and practise them, by repeatedly reminding you of them, lest at any time, through the treachery of your memories, and the heedlessness of your spirits, ye let them slip and make no proper use of them.

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

14 This I am the more desirous to do while opportunity lasts, as being well assured, that the earthly house of this tabernacle will quickly be dissolved, when I must quit my abode in it; even as our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has manifested to me, that the time is now at hand, when I must seal my testimony to him, according to his former intimation about the manner of death, by which in old age I should glorify God. (*John* xxi. 18, 19.)

15 Moreover, I will endeavour, that you may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.

15 And as I am very solicitous for your being established in, and deeply possessed of, these interesting truths, not merely during my continuance in the body; so I shall make it my study and labour, for the little time I have to live, to inculcate them upon you, as I have done by committing them to writing in my former epistle, and now do in this, that ye may ever retain

retain a remembrance and lively sense of them, after I am dead and gone to a better world, by a departure (*ἀποχωρήσει*) of my soul from the body, and from all the sins and sorrows of time, to a perfectly holy and blessed eternity.

16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty.

16 For we, the apostles of Christ, who publish the gospel of the grace of God, have not therein devised sophistical and idle tales of our own heads, like the traditional fabulous stories that abound among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; nor have we, like them, propagated vain conceits, by artful and cunning methods of deceiving, when we declared unto you in preaching, as I also have done in writing, (1 *Epist.* i. 13. and iv. 5.) the things that relate to the divine authority, power, and glory, with which our Lord Jesus Christ will come to judge the world at the last day; but several of us, *James* and *John* together with myself, were present at his transfiguration on the mount, which was a lively emblem and prefiguration of his final glorious appearing; and were eye-witnesses of the illustrious majesty and grandeur, in which he then shone, like himself, as with the meridian brightness of the sun; and was eminently owned of his heavenly Father. (See the note on *Matth.* xvii. 2.)

17 For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

17 For, at that very time, he received an honourable and glorious testimony from God the Father himself, which put the highest dignity upon his character, as his proper Son and the true Messiah, when an audible articulate voice was directed immediately to him from the *Shechinah*, which then appeared as a magnificent symbol of the divine presence, (see the notes on *Matth.* xvii. 5. and *Luke* ix. 26.) and from which God the Father, who is infinitely glorious in himself, and dwells in the inaccessible light and glory of the upper world, distinctly pronounced these words, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, that is, *This Jesus is by way of eminence my most dearly beloved eternal Son, in whose person and office, undertakings, and performances, I am exceedingly delighted, as I also am with all those that are found in him by vital union with him; and so clothed with his righteousness, and washed from their sins in his blood.*

18 And this voice which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

18 And this voice, in which these remarkable words were uttered immediately by the God of heaven, from the cloud of glory in the region of the air, all of us then present distinctly heard with a clear understanding of its import, when we attended our glorious Lord at the very time of his transfiguration on mount *Tabor*, which was sanctified or made relatively holy, for the time being, by the divine presence;

19 We have al-
so a more sure
word of prophecy;
whereunto ye do
well that ye take
heed, as unto a
light that shineth
in a dark place,
until the day dawn,
and the day-star a-
rise in your hearts:

sence; as mount *Horeb* was when the Lord appear-
ed to *Moses* in the bush that burned, and was not
consumed. (*Exod.* iii. 4, 5.)

19 And beside this illustrious attestation to our blessed
Lord, which may well be considered as an *emblematical*
and *presumptive* notification of his future appearing
with divine power and majesty, (*ver.* 16.)* We have
a still more *direct* proof of it, as it may be more affur-
edly gathered from the express declarations even of the
Old Testament, (*ver.* 20, 21.) which are confirmed
in the New, (see *Psal.* xcvi. 13. *Dan.* vii. 13, 14.
Matth. xiii. 40,—43. and xvi. 27. and xxv. 31,—
46. and xxvi. 64. *John* v. 28, 29. *Acts* i. 11. and
xvii. 31. 2 *Cor.* v. 10. 1 *Thess.* i. 10. 2 *Thess.* i. 7,
—10. 2 *Tim.* iv. 1. and 1 *Pet.* i. 9,—13.) unto
which testimony of inspired prophecy, relating to
this very point, ye ought carefully to attend, so as
to be guided and determined by it, as a light that,
like a lamp in a dark place, shines amidst the dark-
ness of Judaism and Heathenism, and of all carnal
hearts; and the darkness comprehends it not: (*John*
i. 5.) It is your duty and interest to study and build
your faith upon this, till the day of Christ's glorious
appearing shall begin to break; and till he, as *the*
Sun of righteousness, the day-star from on high, and
the bright and morning star, (*Malach.* iv. 2. *Luke*
i. 78. and *Rev.* xxii. 16.) shall arise in full lustre, and
shed such a transcendent light in your souls, as shall
entirely

O 2

N O T E.

* We have a more sure word of pro-
phcy is not to be understood, as though
the word of prophecy were in itself more
certain than the glorious attestation
which was given to Christ from heaven,
in the sight and hearing of the apostles;
or as though *this*, as far as it went and
was reported by the apostles, were not
to be as fully credited as *that*. But it
was a more certain and indisputable
proof of Christ's second appearing with
power and great glory, than could be
gathered from what passed in the mount,
according to the ingenious and judicious
sense, in which Dr. *Sherlock*, now bi-
shop of London, has taken it, in his *Dis-
course on Prophecy*, page 20,—22. where
he observes, "that the power and com-
ing of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the only
point here in question;" and so it is, as
though the apostle should say, It is a
great presumption that Christ shall come
in glory, that we have already seen him
glorified; and it is a further evidence
of his power to deliver his servants, since
God has openly declared him to be his

well-beloved Son. But to assure us that
he will indeed *so come*, and *so use* his
power, we have a more sure word of
prophecy; i. e. we have the very word
of God, (speaking by his prophets) to
whom all *futurity is known*, to assure
us of the certainty of this future event.
—But *Gherard* supposes that the *compara-
tive, surer*, may be here used for the
positive degree, surer, as in the *Greek* of
Acts xvii. 21: Or rather he, *Beza*, and
Piscator take the *comparative* to be put
for the *superlative degree*, as in the
Greek of *Acts* xxv. 10. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13.
and xv. 19; and so no comparison may be
here designed, but only a strong asser-
tion of the certainty or firmness of the
prophetic testimony. See also *Glossius's*
Philologia Sacra, page 418. where he
gives several other instances of the *com-
parative* being put for the *superlative*
degree, as particularly in *Matth.* xi. 11.
xviii. 1. and xiii. 32.; and tells us that
some refer, 2 *Pet.* i. 19. to this change
of the degrees of comparison.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost.

entirely dissipate all obscurity, or doubt, about what was intimated by the vision on the mount, and is further confirmed by the sure word of prophecy.

20 In the mean while, ye may confidently depend upon the prophetic testimony to Christ's future glorious appearing, as being, first of all, well satisfied, that no prophecy contained in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, and confirmed by the New, is the product of any man's own invention, according to his private fancy, opinion, or judgment about it, the meaning of which the ancient prophets themselves often did not thoroughly understand. (1 Pet. i. 10, 11.)

21 For none of those prophecies were delivered, and committed to writing, in former times, by the contrivance, will, and pleasure of the prophets, according to what they, as men, thought might be for the best: But those sacred penmen, whom God sanctified for himself, and for his use and service, spake and wrote only such things therein, as were suggested to them by the Holy Spirit, whose immediate dictate excited them to utter the ideas which he raised in their minds, and to express them in words that should convey the true sense of them, according to the further explanation, which he has now given of them in New Testament light.

RECOLLECTIONS.

It is honour enough for any gospel-minister to be, what the apostles counted themselves, the servants of Jesus Christ; and they, who are truly such, cannot but heartily wish, that grace and peace, inclusive of every blessing, may be multiplied to all that have obtained like precious faith with themselves, through the infinite merit of the righteousness of God their Saviour, and through the knowledge of him, who has effectually called them by the gospel to a glorious inheritance, and to a free and holy profession of their faith and hope, till they enter with triumph into his everlasting kingdom. How precious are the promises, by which believers are made partakers of a divine nature, in a holy conformity to God, and departure from all the wickedness of this world, that proceeds from the corruption of men's own hearts! But O, of how great concern is it, to give all diligence, by divine assistance, to add to our faith every Christian grace and lively exercise of it! This will make and prove us to be active believers, whose knowledge of our Lord and Saviour is not a lifeless notion, but will produce substantial and assuring evidences of our effectual calling, and consequently of our election, from whence it flows; and will be the means of preserving us from utter apostacy and falling short of heaven. But he, who is destitute of all this, is still wandering in the dark, and has forgot his profession of being purified from his former sins. What need therefore have gospel-professors of being often put in mind of these important things, though they already know them? And what care should Christ's ministering servants take to repeat them on all occasions, that they may be remembered and practised when they are dead, and gone to heaven; especially considering, that their souls must soon depart from their bodies, which are the frail tabernacles of their present abode! And with what confidence may they recommend and inculcate such things as are founded on the testimony of God himself by his apostles and holy prophets, relating to Christ, whom he declared, with an audible voice from the excellent glory on the mount, to be his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; and relating to the divine majesty and power with which he will gloriously appear at his coming to judge the world: These are not cunningly devised fables, but unquestionable

questionable truths, as contained in the infallible word of God, which was wrote not according to the private will and fancy of men, but by the inspiration of his Spirit; and ought to be attended to as a light, which he has given to guide us through all our darkness in this world, till, by the rising of the Sun of Righteousness upon our souls, we arrive at the unclouded light and glory of the world to come. O may the blessed author of the holy scriptures lead us into the knowledge of his mind and will in them, and make us wise to our own salvation!

C H A P. II.

The apostle cautions believers against false teachers, whom he describes by their pernicious principles and influence, 1,—3. Shews the certainty of their punishment, from the examples of the fallen angels, of the old world, and of Sodom and Gomorrah, which the godly shall escape, as Lot did out of Sodom, 4,—9. And gives a black account at large of these seducers, as they were aggravatedly wicked under high pretences to liberty and purity, 10,—22.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

BUT there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

BUT as there were true and holy prophets of the Lord, who (as has been observed, *chap. i. 21.*) wrote under the inspiration of his Spirit, and are to be attended to; so there were likewise false pretenders to this character, who rose up in former times among the people of *Israel* to seduce them, and were to be guarded against; and this is the case under the gospel-state, according to the predictions of our Lord and his inspired apostles. (*Matth. xxiv. 11. Acts xx. 30. 1 Cor. xi. 19. and 1 Tim. iv. 1.*) There are and will be false teachers rising up among you of the *Jewish* nation, who, under various pretences, will covertly and craftily introduce the most pernicious heretical tenets, which tend to the eternal destruction of those that broach, and those that receive them, as they, both doctrinally and practically, renounce the wisdom, authority, grace, and holiness of their Lord and Master, as discovered in the gospel-revelation of him, whom they boast of, as the God that redeemed or delivered them out of *Egypt* with a mighty hand*, and

NOTE.

* The Lord that bought them may, with the greatest propriety, be here understood of God, as the providential governor and deliverer of *Israel*: For the word (*ἀγοράζω*) here rendered the Lord, is applied to God, when spoken of by way of distinction from our Lord Jesus, that parallel place, *Jude*, ver. 4. and is several times used in other parts of the New Testament with a reference to the Father; but, as far as I find, never to the Son: And his having bought them, purchase which Christ made of these

persons, seems to relate to the temporal deliverances he had wrought for *Israel*, as his professing people, with a reference to *Deut. xxxii. 6.* where, speaking of them as his visible church, it is said, *Is not he thy Father that has bought thee?* And, in the passage before us, there is no intimation of the death of Christ, or of redemption by his blood, as there usually is when redemption by price is intended. —Or if it be supposed to relate to the persons,

and has, through a succession of many ages, signally owned as his professing people, and wrought many temporal salvations for; and so, by acting the most ungrateful, abominable, and self-condemning part, they constructively deny him, and pull down speedy and utter destruction upon their own guilty heads, which may overtake them before they are aware (*1 Thess. v. 3.*)

2 And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

2 And such is the natural depravity of mankind and the enmity of their carnal hearts against God and godliness, that many professors of Christ's name, who have not the grace of God in truth, will be seduced into their destructions, (*απωλαις*) and follow their detestable example in licentious principles and practices, on account of which the truth of the gospel, and the way of holiness and happiness according to it (*βλασφημουνται*) will be blasphemously spoken of by its enemies.

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words, make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

3 And, from covetous reaches after worldly gain, these seducers will use abundance of deceitful flattering speeches, which have no truth or sincerity in them, and are only a cover of their base designs to make a prey of you, that they may get some secular advantage by you, as merchants do by their traffic: But theirs is a dreadful merchandise, whose righteous condemnation has been of old determined of God, (*John* ver. 4. see the note there) to be executed for these flagrant iniquities, in due season, without delay; and whose everlasting destruction hastens apace, and soon will certainly come upon them with a vengeance (*Deut. xxxii. 34, 35.*) as may be concluded from the course of God's dealings with former transgressors.

4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

4 For if (as we well know) God in his awful justice did not shew any favour, or abate the punishment due to that higher rank of originally more excellent creatures, the angels themselves, who, through pride and envy, transgressed the law which God had given them for the trial of their obedience, by swerving from its precepts; but for their first sin hurled them all down with righteous indignation from their blissful, honourable, and holy habitation in heaven, (*John* ver. 6.) into some unknown place of misery, which is called the *deep* and the *bottomless pit*; (*Luke*

N O T E

persons, that they might be eternally saved, it must be understood only according to the judgment of charity, during their former credible profession of his name: Or his having *bought them* may only signify his having *purchased* a dominion over them in such a manner

as may best answer the ends of his kingdom, which rules over all: he being Lord of the quick and the dead, good and bad, and his universal Lordship being founded on redemption by his blood.

31. and Rev. ix. 1, 2. and xi. 7.) and committed them, like condemned criminals, to safe custody, as though bound with the strongest chains in a dungeon of darkness, horror, and despair, to be secured for full torment against the general judgment of the great day.

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

5 And if the holy God had no pity on the wicked generation of men of the same common nature with ourselves in the antediluvian age of the world, that despised and disregarded all his solemn and gracious warnings with great long suffering and patience; but if, while he saved *Noah**, who was the eighth at the head of them that were preserved in the ark, (1 Pet. iii. 20.) and was by divine commission a faithful preacher of moral righteousness repentance, and reformation, and of the righteousness which is by faith, of which he himself was an heir, (Heb. xi. 7.) and a preacher of the righteous judgments of God, which would destroy that impenitent, unbelieving, and disobedient world; If God, I say, at the appointed season, swallowed up the whole of that perverse set of people in the universal deluge of water which drowned them, one and all, how great soever their numbers were:

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

6 And if in like terrible righteousness, and executed by a contrary element, he rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, together with *Admah* and *Zeboim*, (Gen. xix. 24, 25. and Deut. xxix. 23.) to the utter subversion of those cities, reducing them, with all their profligate inhabitants, to ashes in the most dreadful catastrophe, (*καταστροφή*) to which he justly condemned them for their abominable wickedness; and so set them forth as an example of his indignation and wrath, as a type or pattern (*τύπος*) of the final conflagration and eternal fire, which shall consume all the wicked of the earth, (*Jude*, ver. 7.) that it might be a warning to all resolute sinners of succeeding ages, who persist in their iniquities, and cast off his fear; and might shew them what they must expect at his hand:

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

7 And if, in the midst of all the flaming desolation of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, the gracious God put a special mark of kind distinction upon his righteous servant *Lot*, whom he plucked as a brand out of the fire;

N O T E.

* *Noah* was the tenth from *Adam*, as appears by the genealogy in *Luke* iii. 36, —38. and therefore the eighth person cannot mean the eighth from him, but the eighth of them, or the head of the eight, that were saved in the ark, which were his wife, and his

three sons and their wives, together with himself, for whose sake they were preserved, *Gen* vi. 8, 10. compared with *chap*. vii. 7. And therefore the apostle might particularly mention him as the eighth. (See also the note on 1 Pet. iii. 20.)

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3 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished :

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government : presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities :

fire; and so (*aggravate*) with a sort of merciful violence rescued him from it, (*Gen. xix. 16.*) who had been sorely grieved, fatigued, and oppressed in his own pious soul at the vile, dissolute, lascivious, obscene and unnatural behaviour of that perverse and wicked people.

8 (For this holy, just, and good man, who dwelt among them, and daily saw and heard what shocking crimes were openly committed in the course of their flagitious lives, exceedingly laid them to heart, and with the bitterest anguish (*torment*) even tormented his holy soul in mournful reflections on their abominably filthy and unjust actions, which were contrary to all the laws of God and nature.)

9 As certainly as these are all undoubted facts, we may from thence with equal certainty conclude, to the joy of the saints, and the terror of the wicked, that, be the corruptions of the age ever so great, and the snares, troubles, and dangers of his people ever so many, the great Lord of heaven and earth, whose understanding is infinite, and power uncontrollable, and whose kingdom rules over all, perfectly knows at what time, in what manner, and by what means, to extricate those out of all their trials and afflictions, who like *Noah* and *Lot* are religious worshippers of him; and he will assuredly do it in his love and faithfulness to them : And he equally knows how to hold the wicked and ungodly in safe custody, like the fallen angels, (*ver. 4.*) under his supreme dominion, till he shall bring them forth, as condemned criminals, in the day of the final judgment, to be punished according to the iniquity of their hearts and lives.

10 But especially he knows how to reserve, and will severely deal with those impious seducers, (*ver. 1.*) who, answerable to their corrupt principles, live according to the carnal dictates and desires of their sensual minds, indulging themselves, and going on without restraint, in a gratification of their impure and lascivious inclinations, and sodomitical practices (*Jude, ver. 7; 8.*) and who insolently pour contempt upon all regular government and authority over them, that would put a check upon their vices : They are a daring, refractory, disobedient, and headstrong sort of people, ever seeking to please themselves, and have no law to govern them but their own will ; nor do they scruple or fear to speak reproachfully, not only of the apostles and ministers of Christ *, but of

NOTE

* *Despising government, and speaking evil of dignities*, some think refer

civil magistrates that are advanced to high dignity, and worthy of honour, as they are set over them, and are the ordinance of God to regulate and controul their exorbitant passions, appetites, and manners.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

11 They herein act a very contrary part to the holy angels that *excel in strengtb, and do the commandments of God, hearkening to the voice of his word*, (Psal. ciii. 20.) and are superior in dignity and might to these vain boasters, or to any earthly potentates; and yet they, considering civil magistrates as the ordinance of God for good, (see the notes on Rom. xiii. 1,—4.) have such a reverence of him, and are so generous and benevolent to them, as not to revile their persons and government, or bring a slanderous censure upon them (*βλασφημοι κριων*) in the presence of God: Nay, even *Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil himself*, used no opprobrious bitter language against him. (*Jude*, ver. 9.)

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

12 But these presumptuous despisers of government, (*ver. 10.*) instead of imitating the good angels in the decorum of their conduct, are irrational, furious, and brutish, in following their own sensual inclinations, like beasts of prey that are void of understanding, and naturally inclined to rapine and destruction, and are made to be taken and destroyed by men, for whose use they were originally created: These act at such a monstrous rate, as to reproach and rail against persons and things, both of a civil and religious nature, whose use and excellence they neither know, nor approve of; and they shall be utterly destroyed for, and by means of, the indulged corruptions of their own minds and manners.

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time: spots

13 And they shall reap the bitter fruit and wages which are justly due to all their complicated wickedness, as those that glory and take delight in voluptuous and vicious courses, which they impudently pursue in open day-light, instead of being ashamed of

N O T E.

to the vile notions that the *Nicolaitans*, and the *Gnostics* after them, vented about angelical powers, and that the apostle, in the next verse, refers to the good angels not bringing a railing accusation against the apostate spirits, which I have there glanced at, by pointing to what the apostle *Jude* says ver. 9. about the archangel's not bringing a railing accusation against the devil; though that seems to be an additional thought, and not the same with our a-

postle's; and it appears most natural to me to understand him in this verse, as describing persons, whoever they were, that despised civil government, and spoke evil of earthly dignities; in opposition to which, he, in the next verse, alleges the contrary conduct of the good angels that bring no railing accusation against them, with whom he may possibly include ecclesiastical rulers. (See the note on *Jude*, ver. 9.)

spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you;

of them as *works of darkness*, which people, that have the least grain of modesty left, dare venture to practise only in the night: (1 *Theff.* v. 7.) They are a reproach and scandal to the Christian name, gratifying their luxurious inclinations with their own deceived and deceiving devices, whereby they cunningly insinuate themselves into your favourable opinion of them, and please themselves with their having cheated and imposed upon you, while, under pretences of love and friendship, they socially partake in ordinary or religious feasts with you. (*Jude*, ver. 12. see the note there.)

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

14 Their eyes are continually and insatiably employed in wanton adulterous glances, to discover their own lewd inclinations, and excite the like in others, and to find out proper objects for inflaming and gratifying the vilest affections; and so propense are they to all iniquity, that they know not how to refrain from contriving to commit it, or endeavouring to draw others into it; and so, by their enticements in word and deed, they ensnare and catch poor unguarded souls, that are not established in the truth and holiness of the gospel, nor fortified with grace against their guileful arts. Their hearts are entirely engaged in contrivances how to compass their covetous desires after the riches, honours, and desiring pleasures of this world. They are children of wrath, devoted to destruction under the curse of God's righteous and holy law, whose vengeance is ready to be executed upon them.

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

15 And God may justly abandon and abhor them, and give them up to utter ruin, who have renounced the only true way of salvation by Jesus Christ, and of walking before God in faith and holy obedience, according to his mind and will; and have wandered from the path of truth and duty into the ways of sin and error, that lead to eternal misery, as they tread in the very steps of that infamously wicked prophet, Balaam the son of Beor, (*Numb.* xxii. 5.) which in the *Babylonian* dialect is pronounced *Bofor*; and follow his detestable example, who, notwithstanding all his fair pretences to the contrary, bankered after, and had a heart in love with the iniquitous reward which *Balak* offered him, that he might unrighteously curse God's *Israel*.

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass,

16 But he was severely reprov'd for his sin in going about to transgress the positive command of the Lord,* and that by a brute beast, the ass he rode upon.

NOTE.

* Though Balaam had once and again said, that he could not go beyond

is speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.

upon, which, though naturally a dumb creature, was miraculously enabled to speak with an articulate voice like a man; which was a strong indication to the infatuated prophet, that he ought by no means to have persisted in his mad and foolish attempt, which could only turn to his own confusion. (*Numb. xxii. 22,—32.*)

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

17 To give a little further account of the false teachers I am speaking of, they are deceitful, unstable, and utterly destitute of all that is good; their high pretences to knowledge and piety, are like wells that bid fair for the relief of a thirsty traveller; but, having no water in them, disappoint his hopes: And as clouds often look promising for rain to refresh the earth, but are soon dispersed by tempestuous winds, and produce noxious vapours instead of any good effects; so these deceivers pretend to make their profelytes wise to salvation, but are carried by the violence of their corruptions from one error and sin to another, with such a malignant influence, that neither they nor their followers ever come to the knowledge of the truth, and the practice of holiness; and the thickest cloud of horrible darkness, misery, and despair is kept in store, by the righteous judgment of God, for these vile miscreants to be their dreadful portion for ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error:

18 For when they utter great and pompous words with an air of sanctity, and of making some wonderful discoveries, they are all a noise about nothing, empty sounds that vent the pride and vanity of their own hearts; and are thrown out as a bait to entice and catch unwary souls, by being accommodated to the sensual inclinations of depraved nature, and to the lascivious temper of those, that had indeed been brought off from the errors of judaism, or of heathenism, and in their outward behaviour, * for a while at least, had fled from the conversation and practices of

P. 2

such,

N O T E S.

He word of the Lord, and was constrained to refuse Balak's offer; yet it appears from the whole history of him in *Numbers*, (see *chaps. xxi. xxiii.*) that his covetous heart was so set upon the offered bribe, as to make him earnestly desirous, and exceeding restless in attempts, to get a dispensation of God's express command that he should not go with Balak's messengers to curse Israel; and he certainly would have cursed them, had not God invincibly overruled his mind, and restrained him from it, contrary to his own inclination: And when he could not carry his point, he

gave such wicked counsel, as was the means of drawing Israel into a provoking trespass against the Lord, which brought a dreadful plague upon them, as appears from *Numb. xxi. 16.* and *Rev. ii. 14.*

* Some good copies instead of *clean* or *truly* (*οἷος*) read *a little* or *a little while*; (*ολίγον*) others, *almost*; (*ὀλίγως*) and the *Ethiopic*, *a few*, (*ግጥሞች*) Vid. *Mill* in loc. But which ever reading we follow, it seems to relate only to a change of notions, and an external reformation. (See the note on *ver. 20.*)

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

such, as lead wicked lives according to their erroneous principles.

19 At the same time that they flatter their followers with promises of all the liberty they can wish for, to indulge their licentious pleasures, without fear or danger, they are themselves the worst of slaves to the corruptions of their own hearts, which will issue in their final destruction: For whatever a man is entirely overmatched and conquered by, as they are by their own lusts, he is brought into an absolute and slavish subjection to it, like a captive in war that is fallen into the hands of a victorious enemy; and all apostates will surely find that such a sort of pretended liberty is the vilest slavery.

20 For if after they have been so far externally reformed from the gross and scandalous practices of the men of this world which lies in wickedness, (1 John v. 19.) as to have fled from those defilements in life, though not in heart*, through the convictions and restraints that they were brought under by the notions they had received of Jesus Christ, as a Sovereign and a Saviour, to deliver them from sin and the wrath to come; if, after all this, they are again ensnared and involved in those iniquities, and, like persons thoroughly conquered and governed by them, yield themselves up as servants to obey them; their case is more aggravatedly guilty, dangerous, and hopeless, than it was before they knew any thing of Christ and the gospel; and especially than it was, when they first had some conceptions of them.

21 For their sin and punishment would really have been less, had they never heard, or received any notion of Christ and the way of holiness, and of righteousness through him, to eternal life, than, after they have been acquainted with it, to revolt and apostatize from the pure and holy doctrine, which had been preached to them with divine authority to bind it upon their consciences. (See *Matth. xi. 20,—24.* and *John ix. 41.* and *xv. 22.*)

22 But

NOTE

* Escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ, and clean escaped from them who live in error, (ver. 18. see the note there) are the strongest expressions of good that are used in the description of these apostates, and yet neither these, nor any other, import that they ever were really partakers of special saving grace: For persons (like the *slow and thorny ground* hearers, *Matth. xiii. 20,—22.* and like *Herod*, *Mark vi. 20.*) may be so impressed by

mere notions of Christ and the gospel, as to be restrained from gross sins, and brought to a credible profession of obedience, for a while, to the divine commands, and not be thoroughly turned in heart to God, as it is apparent these apostates were not, by their being represented still the same in their natural disposition, as the dog is, that returns to his own vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire, ver. 22. (See the paraphrase there.)

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

22 But it has fallen out with them according to two ancient proverbs, one of which is recorded in the divinely true word of God, (*Prov. xxvi. 11.*) and both are remarkably verified in these apostates; they, under the power of conviction by the light of the gospel, eased their burdened consciences by casting off some vicious practices which they had been addicted to; but their nature not being changed by renewing grace, and their inmost temper being still the same as ever, when their pangs were off, they betook themselves again to their former filthy courses with as much eagerness as before; and so they are like a dog that had cast up what was offensive to his stomach; but, continuing a dog still, and acting suitable to his own nature as such, he licks up his own vomit again; and, under all their external reformatations, they are like a sow that was washed from the filth she had contracted by wallowing in mud and dirt; but, being a sow still, returns, according to her own swinish temper, to rolling herself about in the mire again.

RECollections.

How pernicious and detestable are heretical teachers, whose corrupt principles and practices are subversive of the gospel, even to constructively denying that God, who they own has wrought wonderful deliverances in his providence for them, as his professing people! They put on specious appearances of wisdom and piety to entice, ensnare, defile, and ruin unsifted souls: But with all their high swelling words of vanity, they are void of all good, like wells and clouds without water; and walk after the flesh. They carry on the vilest designs of covetousness, pride, luxury, and all manner of uncleanness, and are a reproach to the Christian name, and all religious society. They presumptuously despise the best of things, which they know nothing of, but which stand in opposition to their carnal views; and under vain boasts and deceitful promises to others of a liberty, which is downright licentiousness, they are themselves the worst of slaves, under every tyrannizing lust, to their own perdition, and the perdition of those that apostatize from Christ and the gospel, through their influence. How shocking are these thoughts! But we need not be stumbled at them, since we are forewarned that such seducers would arise in the church, and draw away many into their mischievous errors and sins. But, ah, how dreadful is the condemnation of those who preach and propagate, and of those who are perverted by heresies that tend to, and will issue in eternal destruction! They have forsaken the only true way to eternal life; and the truth of the gospel is defamed by them, and by others on their account. They are under the curse of God, and liable, without repentance, to severer rebukes than he gave to *Balaam* for his iniquity, by miraculously opening the mouth of the ass he rode upon. Judgment is already passed upon them in the purpose and word of God; and their damnation hastens apace, till it come with fury upon them, as it did upon the fallen angels, and the sinners of the old world in the days of *Noah*, that eminent preacher of righteousness, and upon the profligate cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. They are held, as it were, in adamant chains, to be punished at the great day. But the righteous, who are grieved at the transgressions of the wicked, shall be as effectually delivered, in God's way and time, from all evil, as *Noah* was from the deluge, and *Lot* from the conflagration of those infamous cities. Alas! How heavy will the destruction of the deceivers and deceived be! They shall utterly perish for, and in their own corruption, and receive the dismal reward of all their unrighteousness, in which they rioted and delighted, with open impudence; and the most hideous darkness of horror and despair is laid up in store for their endless misery. Ah! How aggravated is their guilt; and how proportionable

able must be their punishment, who have been externally reformed through convictions by gospel-light; but, taking up short of a work of heart-changing grace, and remaining still the same as ever, in their corrupt temper, return with eagerness to the vices which they had formerly indulged, but which pangs of conscience forced them, for a while, to give up; and so are like the dog that licks up the vomit, which he discharged while it offended his stomach; and like the sow that was washed, and returns with pleasure to wallowing in the mire! O how much better would it have been for such people to have never known the way of righteousness, than in this manner to abuse their knowledge of it! Their condition, after all, is inexpressibly more miserable and hopeless than ever it was before; while the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

C H A P. III.

The apostle declares the design of this epistle to be the same with that of the former, to remind them of Christ's final coming to judgment, 1, 2. Observes that scoffers at Christ's second coming were to be expected under the gospel-state, 3, 4. Confutes their vain and insulating objections against it, and shews that he will certainly appear at unawares, when the present frame of nature will be dissolved by fire, 5—10. And infers from thence, and from the new state of things that will then be introduced, the necessity of holiness, patience, and steadfastness in the faith, 11,—18.

TEXT.

THIS second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

1 That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last

PARAPHRASE.

THE principal design of this second epistle, which I now write to you, my dear brethren in the Lord, beloved of him and me for his sake, is much the same with *that* of the former; in both which I would excite the attention and caution of sincere souls among you, that are not yet corrupted in the faith, but need to be armed against false teachers, by reminding and solemnly warning such of you, again and again, (*chap. i. 13.*) of their destructive schemes and attempts to overthrow your faith and hope, holiness and joy.

2 I am earnestly desirous that ye may bear in mind, and seriously reflect upon, the predictions and doctrines, which were delivered in former times by *holy men of God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; (*chap. i. 21.*) and were more lately confirmed by the commandment, which we, the inspired apostles of our Lord Jesus, the King and Saviour of the church, have received from him, and delivered in word and writing to you, as about other things, so particularly about his second coming to judgment, (*chap. i. 16.*) that ye may be fortified against the pernicious influence of secret and open seducers, and not be stumbled at them.

3 Especially since ye have been forewarned, and may well know, (*Jude, ver. 17, 18.*) that in this last age of God's dispensations toward the church, there would

last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

3 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

would arise among them profane despisers and deriders of the most important points of divine revelation; men, who in the course of their lives give themselves up to, and follow their own carnal devices and corrupt inclinations, passions, and appetites.

4 And under the power of infidelity, they are continually saying in a way of taunt, jeer, and insult, like those ancient scoffers, *Let him make speed and hasten his work, that we may see it.* (Isa. v. 19.) What is become of the promise of your Lord's appearing, as Judge of the world, (*ver.* 7.) to put an end to the present frame of nature; and to take vengeance on his enemies, and deliver his followers out of all their troubles, which ye Christians so confidently talk of, and expect on the foot of divine predictions? Where is there any sign of this? Do not ye plainly see that it is all fancy and delusion, and that there is nothing in it? For ever since the days of our fathers, who, ye say, had the promise of it, and foretold it, but who are long ago dead and gone, or, as ye call it, fallen asleep to awake again at the general resurrection, all things in the whole course of nature continue, without any remarkable alteration, just the same as they were, even from the beginning of the world to this very day. Thus these mockers vainly argue that, because Christ is not yet come to judgment, he never will: But all this reasoning and ridicule is entirely groundless and mere trifling; it proceeds only from the blindness and perverseness of their own corrupt minds and hearts.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water, and in the water:

5 For they wilfully shut their eyes against the scripture-account of the great things, that God has done in his own time, which might satisfy them, that as all things are possible to him; so no argument can be drawn against his never doing what he has not yet seen fit to do: They will not seriously consider, as they ought, that, after an immense duration from all eternity had run out, he by a sovereign almighty command, saying, *Let it be so, and it was so*, created, above four thousand years ago, the aerial heavens, (*see the note on ver.* 7.) with all the waters in the firmament; and the earth, consisting of land and sea, raising the dry land above the surface of the sea, to which he set bounds, (*Gen.* i. 6,—10. and *Pf.* civ. 9.) and placing some part of the earth under the waters, and encompassing and moistening the rest with them, that the dry land might not crumble to pieces.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

6 By means of which waters, from the heavens above and the great deep below, the old world, after it had continued in the same state about sixteen hundred and fifty-six years, was overflowed; and all mankind, except

cept eight persons (see the note on *chap. ii. 5.*) were utterly destroyed by the universal deluge; (*Gen. vii. 11,—23.*) So that there is no room to pretend, that *all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation*; or that any length of forbearance can prevent an accomplishment of the prophecies of Christ's coming to judge the world at the last day; which will bring a more terrible destruction upon the wicked, than was suffered by *Noah's* flood, after it had been foretold an hundred and twenty years. (*Gen. vi. 3.*)

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

7 But the aerial heavens* and this earth, as subsisting in their present form, are kept in their courses as secure as a treasure, (*θεσάυριον αέρος*) according to God's promise, (*Gen. viii. 22.*) by the same powerful and effective word of command, which at first created, and afterward brought destruction upon them: But they are so far from being designed to abide for ever, that they are only reserved for the appointed season of their final dissolution, which will be, not by water, as before, (*Gen. ix. 9,—11.*) but by an universal conflagration, that will set them all on fire, and consume them at the general judgment of the great day; which will certainly be the most dreadful that ever was known to all impious scoffers at it, and to all that fear not God, and despise the only Saviour, who are reserved for destruction against that awful day.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing. That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

8 But, though ungodly men raise objections against the promise of Christ's coming to judgment, as if it never would be fulfilled, because so long a time is already past without any visible appearance of it; (*ver. 4.*) and though, *because sentence against their evil works is not speedily executed; their hearts are fully set in them to do evil*; (*Ecclef. viii. 11.*) Yet, my dear Christian-brethren, whom I consider as beloved of the Lord, I would not have you strangers to, or unmindful of this one thought, which is enough to confute their vain and ignorant cavils, and to quicken your own minds, namely, that with the eternal Jehovah, who is *from everlasting to everlasting God*, and beholds all things, past, present, and to come, in one comprehensive

N O T E.

* By the heavens, as I take it, is meant here, and in *ver. 5.* the aerial heaven, the plural being put, by an analogy of number, for the singular, as it frequently is in other places: (see the note on *Matth. xxi. 7.*) For the heavens and the earth are here spoken of in opposition to those of the old world, which could mean nothing more than the earth and its former atmosphere, the state of

which underwent a great alteration by the flood; and as the waters of the heavens and the earth were a preparation of materials for the universal deluge, so are the fiery comets in the air, and subterraneous fires in the earth for the universal conflagration of the world, which will not be till the day of judgment. (See *Dr. Whitty's* note.)

comprehensive view, *a day and a thousand years* are equally but as a point of time, compared with his own immense duration, without beginning, change, or end, (*Pf. xc. 2, 4.*) and that, in his account, the longest succession of years is infinitely less than a single day is in our ways of reckoning, for fulfilling his purposes and promises; the precise time of which he has fixed, but reserved as a secret in his own breast.

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness) but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

9 As to the great promise in particular, which we are speaking of, the Lord is not dilatory in performing it, as some libertines impiously suggest, to discredit the thing itself; or, as some of his own people may be apt to think, through the workings of too much impatience and unbelief, under their present burdens of sin and sorrow: But it may be said in this case, as in a prophecy of the Messiah's days, (*Hab. ii. 3.*) *The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak and not lie: Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry one moment beyond its set time.* And what some scoffers may count such a delay, as defeats all expectation of the event, is only an exercise of the kind long-suffering and forbearance of God towards us, * who are the objects of his special love, that the whole

N O T E.

* As the persons here meant by *all*, are such as the apostle ranked himself with, and are apparently all along in this chapter, distinguished from *scoffers* and *ungodly men*, (*ver. 3, 7.*) God's *not willing that any should perish*, &c. seems to refer to those who are often called *beloved* in the context, and particularly in the preceding verse, which may naturally include, at least, their being *beloved of God*, as it is expressed (*1 Cor. i. 7.*); and who had been spoken of as *having obtained like precious faith* at the beginning of this epistle, (*chap. i. 1.*) and styled *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*. (*1 Epist. 2.*) And as it cannot reasonably be thought that the long-suffering of God was designed for the salvation of those *scoffers* and *ungodly men*, who are reserved for destruction, together with the heavens and the earth, against the day of judgment: (*2 Pet. 3.*) So his *long-suffering to us-ward* may best be understood as relating to *the elect*, inclusive of those of them that were still to be called in their successive generations, who as one body, or one sort of people, may be spoken of by the apostle in the first person plural, as the whole church, inclusive of those that shall be alive at the second

coming of Christ, are in *1 Thess. iv. 15, 17.* (See the note there, and the paraphrase on *Matth. xxiv. 22.*) Accordingly, the design of God in his long-suffering toward them is, *that none of them should perish, but that all of them should come to repentance* in their proper season. Or, if instead of *to us-ward* (*sic vrac*) we admit of the reading of the *Alexandrian* and *Stevens's* copies, which have it *for you, or for your sakes*, (*si vrac*) and are followed by the *Syriac*, *Ethiopic*, and several other versions, (*vide Mill. in loc.*) it amounts to much the same.—But if, after all, any will insist upon it, that what the apostle here says is to be extended to *mankind* in general, Its meaning, on this supposition, may be, as *Mellis Cradock* and *Pyle* have given it, that the Lord defers his coming in his great long-suffering and patience toward sinners, to afford all of them the utmost opportunities of seeing their errors, and reforming their practices; it being his gracious design to do all, that his justice and goodness will permit, for their salvation; or he not being willing, so far as may consist with his infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness, that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance.

whole number of our body, who belong to the *election of grace*, (Rom. xi. 5.) may be called in their several generations; he having determined in his eternal wisdom and will, that none of these should perish with the scoffers and ungodly before mentioned; (ver. 3, 7.) but that all and every one of them should be turned from their iniquities, and be brought, by his grace, to that evangelical repentance, which is to life and salvation. (ver. 15.)

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

10 But how long soever God may defer the day of final reckoning and retribution, which may be emphatically styled *the great day*, (Jude, ver. 6.) *the day of the Lord Jesus*, and *the day of Christ*, (1 Cor. i. 8. and v. 5. 2 Cor. i. 14. and Phil. i. 6, 10.) as he will then appear in all his glory to judge the world, this solemn day or time will certainly come in its appointed season, and *that* at unawares, as suddenly and unexpectedly to all, and with as much terror to the wicked, as a thief's breaking into a man's house in the dead of the night, while he is fast asleep, and has no thought about it. An awful day this will be to the consternation and ruin of those that are not prepared for it, in which the present state of the aerial heavens will come to a period, (see the note on ver. 7.) by an universal convulsion of all nature with a rapid motion and horrid roar, like a violent storm or tempest, and all the component principles of elementary substances shall melt, like wax, through excessive heat, in the general conflagration; and this earth with all its rich and stately furniture of nature and art, which carnal men place their happiness in, shall be burnt to ashes.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

11 Since therefore it is certain that the present frame of this world, and all its sensitive enjoyments shall be thus amazingly and entirely reduced to a dissolution; how should your *affections*, who profess *to be risen with Christ, be set on things above, and not on things of the earth?* (Col. iii. 1, 2.) And with what watchfulness, care, and circumspection ought ye to behave in all manner of purity and holiness of heart and life toward God and man, and in the exercise of every grace, and discharge of every religious duty with steadfastness, perseverance, and increasing labour, during your short and uncertain abode in the body?

12 Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements

12 How important and becoming is this for persons of your character, who are expecting, looking longing, and tending in your earnest prayers, desires, hopes, and preparations for the time, when that final decisive day of the Lord Jesus shall come according to divine appointment, in which, as has been observed

elements shall melt
with fervent heat?

(*ver. 10.*) the aerial heavens being all in a flame shall be destroyed, and all the constituent principles of the atmosphere, together with the earth and all things in it, shall be melted down by an intense dissolving heat, into a confused chaos, like that, out of which they were originally formed? (*Gen. i. 2.*)

13 Nevertheless
me, according to
his promise, look
for new heavens,
and a new earth,
wherein dwelleth
righteousness.

13 Nevertheless, as the particles of matter, that compose those bodies, will not be annihilated, though wonderfully altered from what they are in their present contexture; we, who believe in Jesus, are supported under present calamities, and awful prospects of this tremendous *catastrophe*, with joyful hopes of its turning to our unspeakable happiness and glory; while, according to the true and faithful promise of our God, (*I. lxx. 17. and lxxi. 22.*) * we expect and long for a glorious and refining change of the present state of things, which for its excellency, as the product of the like almighty power and goodness that created this world, may well be styled *new heavens and a new earth*, in which will be nothing that defiles, but all spotless purity; and in which none but righteous and holy persons shall dwell for ever. (*Rev. xxi. 27.*)

14 Wherefore, be-
oved, seeing that
ye look for such
things, be diligent
that ye may be
found of him in
peace, without
spot, and blame-
less:

14 Therefore, my beloved brethren, since, on the foot of divine revelation, ye earnestly desire, and justly hope for such a glorious and blessed alteration of the whole frame of nature, when Christ shall come to judge the world at the last day, let it be your utmost care and endeavour, through grace, to behave as becomes the expectants of such wonderful events, that ye may meet the Lord Jesus, whenever they come to pass, without terror, and may be found by him as your Judge, and in him with acceptance, comfort, and holy boldness, as washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit; and so may be, not like those that are *spots and blemishes* to Christian societies; (*chap. ii. 13.*) but may appear before him *holy and without blemish*, free from all defilement, as well as condemnation. (*Eph. v. 27.*)

Q 2

15 And

NOTE

* *New heavens and a new earth*, in the style of the Prophet *Isaiah*, are strong figures to represent the glorious change, that should be made in the affairs of the church under the gospel-dispensation, with an ultimate reference to the much more glorious state of things that we look for, as to be introduced at the last day: and, possibly, *new heavens and a new earth*, of a more refined and excellent nature than the present, may in a *literal*

sense be created, out of the dissolved materials, to be the habitation of the saints for ever. But, whatever the meaning be, they are to *succeed* the dissolution of the present frame of the heavens and the earth by fire, and the day of judgment; (*ver. 10.—13.*) and therefore seem to have no relation to the thousand years of Christ's glorious reign on earth, which is to *precede* these great events, (See the note on *Rev. xxi. 1.*)

15 And account that the long-suffering of our Lord & salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;

16 As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

15 And to encourage you hereunto, let it down as a sure principle in your own minds, that the great patience and long forbearance of our Lord towards a sinful world, which his enemies, to countenance their unbelief of his ever coming, call *slackness*, is really designed for, tends to, and shall issue in, not only your own complete salvation, but likewise in the salvation of the whole number of God's elect: (see the note on ver. 9.) And the point I have been principally insisting upon is quite agreeable to what our dearly beloved brother in the Lord, and my fellow apostle Paul, has also delivered in his epistle to professing Christians of your own nation, * (*Heb. ix. 27, 28. and x. 35, 37.*) which he wrote under divine inspiration, according to the eminent knowledge that God gave him, in which he was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles. (2 Cor. xi. 5.)

16 He has also more or less intimated things of this nature in the generality of his other epistles, in which he warns *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, against false teachers and seducers; and speaks of God's long-suffering; of Christ's second coming and its momentous consequences; and of believers patiently waiting for it, and the like: Among which things (*scilicet*) there are, as he himself says to those *Jews* that were dull of hearing, (*Heb. v. 11.*) some doctrines, which though certain truths, and as plain in themselves as their sublime and spiritual nature well admit of, are not easily apprehended and received by weak and prejudiced minds; and which, through the darkness, pride, and corruptions of men's own hearts, they that are not taught of God by his Spirit †, but are unskilful

ful

NOTES.

* *Hath written to you* is generally understood as referring to the epistle to the *Hebrews*, by most commentators, who take the apostle Peter's epistles to have been wrote to the converted *Jews*: But some, who take it to have been wrote to the converted *Gentiles*, suppose the reference is to those epistles to *Gentile* churches in *Asia Minor*, to which the apostle Paul wrote.—But our apostle seems to refer to some one of Paul's epistles in particular, with a distinction of it from all his other epistles; and I cannot but think that several passages in our apostle's two epistles immediately point to *Jewish* Christians; (see the preface to this first epistle) and that the reference is more probably to the general epistle to the *Hebrews*, than to any epistle that was directed to only one particular church.

† *They that are unlearned* do not here mean *illiterate* persons, according to our common use of that word: But it is to be understood of those that are strangers to all true principles of religion, or fluctuating in their notions about it, through the corruptions of their own hearts; and so some things in the apostle Paul's writings were hard for them to understand, because they could not resist them, as well as that there were others of too spiritual and sublime a nature for their injudicious and carnal minds to take in, or indeed for any finite mind fully to comprehend. But this is no argument either against the perspicuity of scripture, especially in things that are necessary to salvation, or against the common people's reading them: For though the apostle says, that some things in Paul's epistles, he does not say just the

ful in the word of righteousness, or are sceptical and unsettled in their principles, wrack and torture to a wrong meaning, and pervert the sense and use of them, as they likewise do many other passages of holy writ, both of the Old and New Testament, to their own eternal perdition with high aggravations of their guilt, instead of receiving them with meekness and improving them, as means of *making them wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.* (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.

17 Since therefore ye, my dear brethren, are forewarned of all these things, and so fore-armed against crafty seducers; and since ye know beforehand, that Christ will certainly come to judgment, and take vengeance upon all the ungodly; have a care lest any of you being drawn aside, (*ἀπομαχθῆναι*) with other apostates, from him, and from the way of truth and holiness, by the false notions, deceitful insinuations, and vile practices (*ἀδίσκωτοι*) of impious, immoral, and lawless men, ye fall from your own stability in the doctrines, purity, and profession of the gospel, in which ye have hitherto persisted.

18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

18 But to help you against all declensions, and revolts, let it be your earnest prayer, and endeavour, in the use of all proper means, to be progressive in daily exercises and increases of every Christian grace, as also in an abiding sense of the free love and favour of God, according to the gospel; and in a clear, fiducial, practical, and experimental acquaintance with the person and offices, doctrines, promises, and commandments of our divine Lord and all-sufficient Saviour Jesus Christ, and with your own personal interest in him: To whom be ascribed, as is most justly due, all adoration, worship, and honour, henceforth and for ever. May we, together with all the saints and angels, sincerely add, in testimony of our approbation, hope, and assurance of its being so, *Amen!*

RECOLLECTIONS.

What need have we to be often reminded of the doctrines and commandments, that are delivered to us by our Lord Jesus and his inspired prophets and apostles; and to be cautioned against the errors and evil practices of wicked and designing men, that we may not be unsettled in our religious principles by them? And how important is it to believers, for preventing this evil, that they grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, all their days! The great doctrines of divine revelation are evidently confirmed by the harmony of inspired writings, both of the

Old

NOTE.

the epistles themselves, or that many, unlearned persons did read them, or at much less all of them, are hard to be understood, but gives an honourable testimony to him and his epistles, as his beloved brother, who had wrote them according to the wisdom that God had given him: And it is supposed that these

least heard them read, which he does not blame them for, but only for their making a bad use of them, as many do of the best and most necessary things in the world, by perverting them to their own destruction.

Old and New Testament; and yet, alas! How many are there who, through wilful blindness and prejudices, ridicule, and raise groundless objections against the most interesting points of faith, like that of Christ's coming to judgment! And how many that have not learnt the first principles of the oracles of God, but are of a sceptical temper, and pervert the plain meaning of various scriptures to their own destruction! But the word of the Lord stands fast for ever; and the promise of Christ's second coming shall certainly be fulfilled in its appointed season, to the joy of the saints, and the confusion of sinners. As this world was once destroyed by a universal deluge of water; so the whole system of its present frame shall hereafter be set on fire, dissolved and burnt up by a universal blaze of melting heat, to which it is reserved against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, who shall be tormented for ever with unquenchable flames. But O what a magnificent state of bliss and glory in the new heavens and new earth, all refined, pure, and holy, shall the habitation of the righteous be, without any mixture of sin, or sinners! How soon this finishing day will come, the Lord only knows; but it certainly will come, and *that* as suddenly and unexpectedly as a thief in the night, with terrible surprize to all that shall be unprepared for it. Some indeed would suspect that, because it is hitherto deferred, it never will be at all. Vain and foolish thought! A thousand years are infinitely less in the account of the eternal and unchangeable God, than one day is in ours; and what may seem to be a *delay* in the opinion of some, is only his *long-forbearance and patience* towards a sinful world, till all his elect be gathered in, that none of them may perish, but all and every one of them may be brought to saving repentance. Since therefore we, who believe in Jesus, know that there will be a total dissolution of this world and of all things in it; how circumspect, holy, and religious, weaned from the present life and all its concerns, ought we to be in our temper and behaviour! And since we desire and expect a perfect state of happiness in that eminent day of the Lord, and are forewarned of deceivers, that would turn us aside from him and from our way to heaven; how solicitous should we be for constant supplies of grace to enable us so to walk with God, as to find favour and acceptance with him in the beloved, till we be presented holy and unblameable in his sight through Jesus Christ! To whom be glory and honour through all ages, and for ever. *Amen.*

A PRAG

A PRACTICAL
E X P O S I T I O N
OF THE
FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL
OF THE
A P O S T L E J O H N,
IN THE FORM OF A
P A R A P H R A S E.

THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THOUGH the name of the writer of this, and the two following short epistles, be not prefixed to them; there is nevertheless no room to doubt but that it was the apostle *John*, whose name is no more mentioned in his *gospel*, than in either of these epistles. All antiquity ascribes the *first* of them to him; and it was not long before the other two were generally esteemed canonical, and received as such; and the great similitude, and even sameness of phraseology and spirit, that runs through them all and his *gospel*, carry their own evidence of their being wrote by the same hand: Accordingly they cast a good light one upon another; and many passages of these epistles may be cleared up, by comparing them together, and with the evangelist.

The place from whence, and the time when, they were written, cannot be fully determined; but they seem to have been sent from *Ephesus*, or some part of *Asia* the less, where this apostle chiefly laboured, and before the destruction of *Jerusalem*, as may be conjectured from his speaking of the *last time as then come*, chap. ii. 18. which probably relates to the last period of the *Jewish* church and state, and the commencement of the *gospel* dispensation, which is the last, and shall remain to the end of the world; and from his mentioning many *antichrists* and *false teachers*, as already appearing, which our Lord foretold would arise before the desolation of the temple, chap. ii. 18. and iv. 1. compared with *Matth.* xxiv. 24.

The persons, to whom this epistle was wrote, were not any particular church, but all *Christians* in general of that age, perhaps, principally *Jews*, but inclusive of *Gentiles*, with a view to all succeeding generations; on which account it is called a *general epistle*. And the

the immediate *occasion* of writing it appears to have been taken from the pernicious efforts of judaizing and antichristian teachers, who had broached many gross errors in doctrine and practice, and were the fore-runners of others, who the apostle foresaw, by the spirit of prophecy, would rise in after-ages, to corrupt and trouble the church under *papal* tyranny, superstition, and idolatry: In opposition to all which, our apostle's chief design was to establish believers in the faith of Christ's being the Son of God, and the true Messiah; to lead them into affecting views of the love of the Father in sending him, and bestowing the most glorious benefits upon them on his account; and thereby engaging their love to him and to one another, and sweetly constraining them to depart from all iniquity, and yield a cheerful obedience to all divine commandments, answerable to their high privileges, hopes, and obligations.

He begins with giving them the strongest evidence of the truth of what he delivered to them concerning Christ, that they might share, and rejoice with himself and his fellow-apostles, in their happy communion with the Father and the Son; and reminds them of their imperfection through indwelling sin, and at the same time of the necessity of departing from the practice of it, *chap. i.* He then comforts them under a sense of the disallowed sin that still remained in them; but shews that, if they were real Christians, their freedom from its dominion must be demonstrated, by their unfeigned obedience to God's commands, by their love to the brethren, and sitting loose from this world; and by watching and guarding against seducers, in virtue of the anointings of the Spirit which they were favoured with, *chap. ii.* He thereupon breaks out into a rapturous admiration of the love of God in making them his children; and infers from their hope of perfect holiness and happiness with Christ, that they ought to abstain from all iniquity, and live after a holy rate, and in a cordial affection to all their Christian brethren, as those that are born of God, and have an irreconcilable aversion to sin, *chap. iii.* From hence he proceeds to caution them against hearkening to every pretender to the Spirit, and shews how to distinguish the spirit of truth and of error; and adds various arguments to excite their brotherly love, *chap. iv.* Sets before them the efficacy of evangelical love, as springing from faith in Christ, whose divine and saving character is attested by three unexceptionable witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, together with that which believers have in themselves; assures them that all their prayers, according to the will of God, shall be answered; that they who are born of God shall be preserved from the evil one, and are happily distinguished from the world which lies in wickedness; and concludes with an exhortation to renounce all idolatry, *chap. v.*

C H A P. I.

The apostle prefaces his epistle to believers in general with evident testimonies to Christ, for promoting their happiness and joy, 1,—4. Shews the necessity of a life of holiness, in order to communion with God, and relieves them under a sense of in-dwelling sin, which they ought humbly to acknowledge still remains with them; but from which there is an all-cleansing virtue in the blood of Jesus, 5,—10.

TEXT.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life;

PARAPHRASE.

THE design of this epistle is to set forth what I and other apostles of our Lord are fully assured of, upon undeniable evidence, and cannot but testify, (*Acts iv. 20.*) concerning the person and saving office of Christ. This *divine person*, who in his original nature was, before all worlds, * truly and properly God, the same in essence with, though distinct in personality from God the Father; whom, when he was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, (*John i. 1, 2, 14.* see the notes there) we often heard in his public preaching and private discourses; whom we also have seen with our own eyes, as at numberless times *before*, so again and again *after* his death and resurrection; whom we have attentively and delightfully considered on various occasions, and whose *glory we beheld, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (*John i. 14.*) And even *after*, as well as *before* his resurrection from the dead, we had all desirable opportunities of touching and feeling him with our own hands; (*Luke xxiv. 39.* and *John xx. 27.*) and so had all possible demonstration of the reality of his risen human body, as consisting of flesh and bones, which he had assumed into personal union with himself, who is styled both *the Word* and *the Life*, (*John i. 1, 4.*) as he is the living *personal Word* of God, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is the fountain and author of the life of all creatures, and

NOTE.

* Though from the beginning, (*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*) and in the beginning (*ἐν ἀρχῇ*) as we have it *John i. 1.* are somewhat different expressions; yet as Christ is here styled in the next verse *eternal life*, it is natural to take in his *eternal existence*, correspondent to this apostle's assertion of it, *John i. 1.*: And ye have known him that is from the beginning, (*ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*) chap. ii. 13, 14. (see the note there) whether applied to the Father or Son, evidently relates to his *eternal existence*;

and our apostle speaks of *names that were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world.* (*ἀποκαταστάσεως κόσμου*) Rev. xviii. 8. which I think means *from eternity*. Accordingly we may take that which was from the beginning to relate to the *eternal deity* of Christ, rather than to the *beginning of the gospel dispensation*, though it may bear the last of these senses in some other parts of this epistle.

and particularly of all spiritual and eternal life to his people.

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

2 (For he in whom is life, and who is the life-giver, (*John i. 4.*) was *God manifested in the flesh*; (*1 Tim. iii. 16.*) and we, his apostles, have actually seen and conversed with him in his human nature; and, as authorised by his immediate commission, do bear our testimony to him in all his characters, and discover to you his divine person and offices, who had originally and eternally life in himself, and was from all eternity co-existent with God the Father, and was conspicuously made known to us *in the fulness of time*, in which *God sent him forth, as his own Son, made of a woman, made under the law, &c.* Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

3 That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

3 *That*, I say, which we, in the manner but now mentioned, have both seen and heard of him, and in which it was impossible for us to be mistaken, we now publish and make known to you, to the end that ye, who believe in him, may have a partnership and communion, as one spiritual and holy body with us, in all the gracious promises, ordinances and influences, blessings and privileges, that belong to the gospel-state, and that we ourselves are admitted to: And this is a communion of the most excellent, honourable, and heavenly nature, richly worth your coming into; it being in reality a communion with God the Father himself in all the blessings of his love, which are communicated to us through Jesus Christ, his eternal Son; and with this dear Son of the Father in all the blessings of his purchase, as, through him, we are *children and heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*, (*Rom. viii. 16, 17.*) and have access through him by one Spirit to the Father; (*Eph. ii. 18.*) and so have communion with the Holy Spirit too, in all his graces and comforts, (*2 Cor. xiii. 14.*) which is the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; where we shall have the most intimate and blissful communion with the sacred Three in all their glory for ever.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

4 And our aim in writing these great things to you is, that ye may have a fulness of solid satisfaction and rejoicing in this delightful and holy communion, which makes up the noblest pleasure we are capable of, till it be perfected in heaven.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

5 Now, in order to your having the joy of this excellent communion, and being partakers of all the blessings of it, ye ought to know what God is, and who they are that shall inherit his grand promise (*εὐμαρτυρία*) of eternal life. (*Chap. ii. 25.*) And the sum of that doctrine concerning his nature and perfections, which we ourselves have heard from the mouth

mouth of our Lord in his ministration upon earth, and which, as his messengers, we publish to you, is this, That God is an absolutely perfect Spirit, (*Matth. v. 48.* and *John iv. 24.*) infinite in wisdom, purity, blessedness, and glory, and in all other adorable excellencies, that can be comprehended in an idea of the most illustrious, amiable, and all-penetrating light; and in him there is not the least defect of any kind, or mixture of any thing contrary, or unsuitable to his perfect rectitude, who utterly abhors all iniquity. (See *Habak. i. 13.* and *Pf. v. 4, 5.*)

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth :

6 It is therefore a plain consequence from hence, that if any of us, who bear the Christian name, pretend to be admitted to comfortable communion with God, and hope of enjoying him, who is so unspottedly pure and holy; and if, at the same, we live in the practice of any known sin, which involves ignorance and error, and is the worst of all darkness in us, (*Rom. xiii. 12.* and *Eph. v. 8.*) but is open to his all-seeing eye; (*Heb. iv. 13.*) we are insincere in that profession, and practically give the lie to it, and in works deny it; (*Tit. i. 16.*) and we speak and act in direct contradiction to the nature and will of God, who is truth itself, and to the whole tenor and design of the gospel-revelation, or of his word, which is truth; (*John xvii. 17.*) yea, directly contrary to the very nature and truth of things, which render it impossible that righteousness should have any fellowship with unrighteousness, or light with darkness. (*2 Cor. vi. 14.*)

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

7 But if, according to our profession, we, as children of light, (*1 Thess. v. 5.*) do indeed live and walk, under the guidance and influence of the Spirit, in ways of truth and holiness, in the light of gospel-revelation, and in resemblance of him, who dwells in immortal light, (*1 Tim. vi. 16.*) and has said, *Be ye holy; for I am holy.* (*1 Pet. i. 16.*) We then have the best of all communion, be with us, and we with him, in which all true believers share as fellow-Christians: And one great blessing, and even the foundation, of this communion is, that the precious atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who is both the anointed Saviour, and the eternal eminently beloved Son of the Father, is continually efficacious for cleansing us from the guilt, condemnation, and power of all our sins; and, at length, from all remaining defilement and in-being of sin, which, for his sake, shall be entirely purged away, and have no more place in us, or bad effects upon us; but we shall be as like as possible to him, when *we shall see him as he is.* (Chap. iii. 2.)

8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

8 However, as sin came into the world with us, and cannot be utterly extirpated till we die out of it, if any of us, who pretend to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, are so ignorant, proud, and vain, as to imagine that, in this present state of weakness and mortality by reason of sin, we are so thoroughly cleansed from it, as to have no remainders of its workings in us, we certainly deceive our own souls; and neither the truth of God's word, which abundantly declares the contrary, nor any true light of knowledge, grace, or holiness is found in us.

9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

9 If, on the other hand, we, under a humbling sense of our imperfections and many disallowed failures, acknowledge our transgressions to the Lord, and confess them with faith in Christ's propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of them, and with penitential shame and contrition, abhorrence of them, and full purpose of heart, by his grace, to forsake them, (*Prov. xxviii. 13.*) as all the iniquities of Israel were confessed over the head of the scape-goat, and they assisted their souls in reflection upon them, (*Lev. xvi. 21, 29, 30.*) he is so true and faithful to his promise to the Redeemer, and to those that believe in him; (*Isa. liii. 11.* and *Heb. viii. 12.*) and is so just to the merit of his blood, (*Rom. iii. 26.*) as for his sake freely to pardon all our sins of omission and commission, in thought, word, and deed, and purge our consciences from guilt; and to cleanse us from the reigning power and defilement of all our iniquities by the sanctification of the Spirit, which was purchased by the blood of his Son to purify our hearts and lives, that we may be fit for communion with him in this world, till we be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy in the world to come. (*Jude, ver. 24.*)

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

10 If, after all, we assert that we have not transgressed the law of God, so as to need pardon through the blood, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, we, in effect, make God himself a liar, as we therein deny the truth of what he has said in his word, which pronounces upon the whole race of mankind, that all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (*Rom. iii. 23.*) and we thereby shew that the truth of the gospel has no place in us, the very nature of which supposes us to be sinners, and is designed to bring us to a humble, penitent confession of sin; (*ver. 9.*) and to faith in the Redeemer's blood for the remission of it, (*ver. 7.*) and for victory over it, till we shall be completely delivered from the whole of sin in that heavenly Jerusalem, into which nothing shall

shall enter that defiles, or works abomination, or makes a lie. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

What incontestible evidence have we from faithful eye and ear-witnesses of the truth of the gospel-revelation, concerning Christ and the benefits brought in by him! And what a blessed communion are true believers hereby led into with God the Father, and his only begotten Son, who, as a divine person, was ever living with him, and as the incarnate Saviour is the author of eternal life to them. And O the fulness of joy that abounds in them, who are partakers of these blessings! But as God is infinitely pure and holy, and possessed of all exalted and amiable perfections, that can go into the notion of the most illustrious light, and is absolutely abhorrent of all iniquity, and free from every kind of defect; it is vain self-delusion, and directly contrary to him, to his word, to the nature of things, and to the truth of the gospel, for any who live in a course of sin, which is the worst of all darknesses, to imagine, or pretend, that they have communion with him. And, on the other hand, it is as vain and self-deceiving, and as directly giving the lie to God himself, in the declarations of his word, for any to think or say, that they are entirely free from all remainder of sin, in this frail and mortal state. But if, with humble acknowledgments of indwelling sin, and of our need of a Saviour, and with faith in him, we conscientiously confess and depart from all iniquity, and walk, under the guidance and influence of the Spirit, in the light of truth and holiness, conformable to the nature, will, and commandments of God, who is light; we really have communion with him, a fundamental part of which is, that the infinitely precious blood of Christ, his beloved Son, is effectually applied to us for the remission of all our sins, and for subduing their power in us: And God is so faithful to his promise, and just to the merit of his Son, as to pay by our transgressions for his sake, and gradually sanctify and cleanse us from all iniquity; till, at length, in a better world, we shall be holy, and without blemish; not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.

C H A P. II.

The apostle directs believers to the advocacy and atonement of Christ for help and relief against sinful infirmities, 1, 2. Describes the effects of a saving knowledge of, and union with him, as productive of obedience and love to the brethren, 3,—11. Addresses Christians under the various characters of little children, young men, and fathers, 12,—14. Cautions them all against inordinate love of this world, and antichristian errors, 15,—23. And encourages them to stand fast in the faith and holiness of the gospel, according to the light and influence of the spiritual unction, which they had received, 24,—29.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

MY little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man

THE design of what I have thus far wrote (*chap. i.*) is to caution you, whom I consider with all affection, endearment, and tenderness, as though ye were the young offspring of my own bowels, * to take

N O T E.

* *My little children* is an appellation by which our apostle often addresses the whole body of these Christians; and so it is mostly to be understood, not as a term

of distinction of younger and weaker, from older and stronger believers, as in *ver. 12, 13* (see the note there) but as a term of tenderness and endearment, as our

man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

take heed of giving way to any known iniquity, or of falling into it through surprise or temptation, much more of living in the practice of it: And it is with this further view, that, as we all have sinned, and remainders of corruption still attend us; (*chap. i. 8, 10.*) So, to prevent your despairing of mercy on that account, ye may consider that, "when any of us, who believe, fall, through infirmity and temptation, into one or another transgression, (*For there is not a just man upon earth that doth good, and sineth not*, Ecclef. vii. 20.) we have a glorious and ever-prevailing intercessor to plead our cause, with him and our Father, *the Judge of all*, (*Heb. xii. 23.*) against the charges of law and justice, and the accusations of Satan, that our iniquities may not be charged and punished upon us according to their deserts, nor be suffered to prevail and reign in us, as they do in others: And this advocate is no less than Jesus Christ, *the Lord our righteousness*, (*Jer. xxiii. 6.*) who is perfectly holy and righteous in himself, and has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for us, which he presents before the throne in his intercession on our behalf.

1 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

2 And we may safely depend upon, and take the comfort of his interest with God the Father for us, as all his advocacy is founded on the effectual atonement he has made, to the full satisfaction of divine justice, that we may be forgiven all trespasses, and none of them may have dominion over us: And his atonement is not only for our sins, who are of *Jewish* extract, and have already believed; but also for the sins, not indeed of the whole race of mankind, since he prays not for them all universally, (*John xvii. 9.*) and multitudes of them perish in and by their iniquities; but for the sins of all, for whom he is an advocate, (*ver. 1.*) and who do, or shall hereafter believe in him, (*John xvii. 20.*) even *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, wheresoever they be scattered abroad through the whole world. (See the notes on *John i. 29.* and *iii. 16.*)

3 And

NOTES.

our blessed Lord himself used it to his disciples, *John xiii. 33.* And perhaps many whom the apostle wrote to were converted by his ministry, which engaged his most affectionate love to them; and as he was by this time an old man, it was the more decent, and befitting his age, to speak to all believers under this title.

* The particle (*me*) rendered *if* frequently signifies *when*, and particularly

in the style of our apostle, as in *John xii. 32.* (see the note there) and *xiv. 1.* and *xvi. 7.* And *Calvin* on this place thinks, that it ought to be resolved into a *causal* particle, because it cannot be but that we should sin; and so the apostle confirms what he had been saying, *chap. i. 8.* about sin's remaining in true believers themselves, who are far from being perfect in holiness.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But who so keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

7 Brethren. I write no new command.

3 And it is evident to us, that we have a true and saving knowledge * of Christ, which includes faith in him and love to him, if it has a powerful influence to engage us unto a sincere, cheerful, and unreserved obedience to whatever he has commanded, both in the precepts of the moral law, and in the institutions of the gospel. (*John xv. 14.*)

4 Whoever he be that pretends to say, † I have known, loved, and believed in him, and have had communion with him, (*chap. i. 6.*) and yet makes no conscience of keeping his holy commandments, that man speaks what is utterly false, and inconsistent with his ever having had an effectual knowledge of him: He gives the lie to his own profession, and to the word of God; and there is neither sincerity in his assertions, nor the truth of grace, or of the gospel in his heart.

5 But whoever duly regards, holds fast, and carefully observes the doctrines, ordinances, and duties contained in the word of the Lord, he is undoubtedly under the eminently governing influence of that sincere and supreme love to God, which, under a sense of his love, constrains him to keep his commandments, and not count them grievous. (*Chap. v. 3.* and see the note on *chap. iv. 12.*) When it is thus with us, we are hereby well assured, that we are vitally united to Christ, and interested in all his benefits.

6 Keeping his word is so closely connected with our union and communion with him, that every one who professes a special interest in him, as one that dwells in him, (*John vi. 56.*) and would make it out to himself and others, is indispensibly obliged to live and act in the course of his conversation after Christ's own example, and to *tread in his steps*, by a holy and humble imitation of him. (*1 Per. ii. 21.*)

7 In my so earnestly pressing you, dear Christian brethren, to an imitation of Christ, and *that* with regard

NOTES.

* Knowledge is sometimes put for, or is at least inclusive of faith, as in *Isa. liii. 11.* and *John xvii. 3.*; and at others, of approbation, or love: (see the note on *Matth. vii. 23.*) and our context leads us to understand it here of such a fiducial, affectionate, and practical knowledge, as is necessary to fellowship with Christ and a personal interest in his propitiation.—And that Christ is the person here referred to, appears from his being the immediate antecedent; accordingly we take him to be meant all along in the three following verses, though he be not

expressly mentioned again in either of them; and yet he is plainly pointed out in *ver. 6.*

† I know him, is in the Greek, (*γινωσκω*) I have known him: And the apostle's saying, that if he, who pretends to this, keeps not his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him, intimates that he never had the true knowledge of Christ, or the truth of faith, or of any other grace in him, but was a hypocritical professor; otherwise, it would certainly have had a better effect upon him.

mandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment. I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

gard to the great duty of *love*, which I am in a special manner going to recommend to you, (*ver.* 8, 11.) I do not write about any commandment that is entirely new; but remind you of a divine precept, which, for the substance of it, was delivered, as of perpetual obligation, long ago, even as long as the beginning of the Old Testament revelation; and which ye were taught, with additional light and enforcements, at the first publication of the gospel among you. (See the note on *John* xiii. 34.) This ancient commandment, which is contained in the law given by *Moses*, (*Lev.* xix. 17, 18.) and enforced by our blessed Lord in the beginning of his ministry, is what ye heard in the word, that was preached to you at your very first believing, and entering upon the profession of his name.

8 But to give you a larger and still more striking view of it, I now again write to explain the excellent duty of *brotherly love*; and to inculcate it upon you under new obligations, motives, encouragements, assistances, and endearments, to enforce it, and to raise it to a higher degree of spiritual, extensive, and cordial affection, according to Christ's new injunction of it, (*Matth.* v. 43, 44.) than ever was known or practised before; and with regard thereunto it may be called a new commandment, which is eminently copied out with the greatest truth and evidence in Christ, who in his transcendent love has set you the brightest example of it, and which is imitated to a good degree in you, who *are taught of God to love one another*; (*1 Thess.* iv. 9.) because the darkness of the Old Testament dispensation, and of your former state of ignorance, error, and sin, passes away, (*παρρησια*) and in great measure is over and gone, and the clear light of the truth of the gospel in the revelation it makes of Christ, who is by way of eminence *the true light*, (*John* i. 9.) is now displayed in its full glory, and shines in your hearts. (*2 Cor.* iv. 6.)

9 He therefore who professes to believe the gospel, and to be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and purified by that means, and at the same time is under the power of an uncharitable, malicious, and revengeful temper towards his Christian-brother, is a stranger to evangelical light and grace, and remains in a state of sin and error, which is the worst of all darkness, to this very day.

10 On the contrary, the believer who has a cordial affectionate love to his brother for Christ's sake, in imitation of him, under the constraints of his love, and in obedience to his commands, really is, and shews that he continues to be, enlightened and renev-

ed by the grace of the gospel according to his profession of it; and there is no room for taking offence at him, who lays no stumbling-block before his brethren, nor is apt to take offence at them; nor will any difficulties he may meet with, in the way of his duty, be a stumbling-block to himself, to hinder his cheerfully persisting in it: *For great peace have they that love God's law, and nothing shall offend them.* (Pl. cxix. 165.)

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

11 But, as I said before, (ver. 9.) and now repeat it, the more deeply to impress it upon your consciences, every professor of Christ's name that harbours a severe, unfriendly disposition, and indulges prejudices in his heart against his brother, is still in an unregenerate state, destitute of saving knowledge, and under the power of sin; and, be his pretences what they will, he hereby shews that he goes on in such errors and evil courses as are spiritual darkness itself; and doth not understand the way that leads to eternal life, or the way in which he should walk to the glory of God, and his own and others good; nor doth he discern and consider the sad tendency and dismal consequence of his pernicious sentiments and practices, because of the natural blindness of his heart; (Eph. iv. 18, and 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.)

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

12 The admonitions, cautions, and encouragements which I have given, especially about the great duty of love, and shall still further give you, are such as equally concern you all, whatever be the different degrees of your gifts and graces, or of your rank and standing in Christianity. As to those of you that are young converts, or for weakness of faith and understanding, and all other religious attainments are but as *babes in Christ*, (1 Cor. iii. 1.) * and are apt to be

NOTE.

* Beza, Piscator, and many expositors following them, apprehend that the apostle does not begin his distribution of Christians into the several classes of *fathers, young men, and little children*, till he comes to the next verse, because the Greek word, (παιδια) here rendered *little children*, is different from that in the original, (παιδια) which is so rendered in the 13th verse. But this criticism, I doubt, is scarce sufficient to support its design, since the last of these words (παιδια) is evidently used, ver. 18. and John xxi. 5. in the same sense as the first (παιδια) is in several other parts of this epistle. I therefore rather incline to think that they are here and in the 13th verse to be taken, as carry-

ing much the same meaning, to describe the lower rank of Christians; and that the apostle begins his distinction of the several ages of believers in this verse, and repeats it just in the same order in the two following verses, which appears more natural, than to suppose that he drops *little children*, and mentions only *fathers and young men* in the first distribution of the several ranks of Christians, for which, as far as I see, no good reason can be given. And were the verses (which are of modern invention) better divided, so as to join *two thirds* of the former part of the 13th to the 12th verse, and the *last clause* of the 13th to the 14th, or to begin the 14th verse with that clause, the natural order of the apostle's

be mightily concerned about pardon of sin, as little children commonly are about forgiveness from their offended parents; I write to you, because, though your faith be ever so weak, yet, being sincere, all your trespasses, as well as those of stronger believers, are freely forgiven of God, (*Col. ii. 13.*) for the praise of the glory of his grace, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, through the merit of his atoning blood, in whose name this great benefit has been preached, and is conveyed to you. (*Luke xxiv. 47. and Acts xiii. 38.*) Ye therefore should love much, because much is forgiven you. (*Luke vii. 47.*)

13. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

13, 14. As to those of you that are of long standing in Christianity, and have attained a large stock of knowledge and experience, like old men and fathers, who delight to hear and speak of, search into, and reflect upon ancient things; I write to you, fathers in Christ, because ye have been a great while acquainted with, and your thoughts are much employed about *the Ancient of Days*, (*Dan. vii. 9.*) * even God the Father and his co-eternal Son, (*1 John i. 1.*) together with their eternal counsels and designs according to the gospel-revelation of them. Ye therefore, whose hearts are so much taken up with the eternal love of the Father and Son, ought to abound in the exercise of this grace. As to those of you, who, for zeal, activity, and spiritual attainments, are like young men that are come to the strength and vigour of their age, and fit for military exploits; (*see Mark xiv. 51.*) I write these things to you, because, being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, (*Eph. vi. 10.*) ye have encountered, wrestled against, and obtained glorious victories over your great *adversary the devil*, that vile, apostate, wicked spirit, *who walks about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* (*1 Pet. v. 8.*) And as ye are conquerors only through him that loved you, (*Rom. viii. 37.*) ye ought to love him, and your brethren for his sake.—To impress these things the more deeply upon you severally, *I now say again*, (*see Gal. i. 9.*)

I write

NOTES.

the apostle's way of ranging these different degrees of Christians would have appeared with more propriety and exactness.—And in what he writes to them severally, there seems to be a beautiful allusion to such sort of things as are most generally suited to the taste of mankind in these different stages of life, as suggested in the paraphrase, according to Dr. Goodwin's observation, (*Vol. IV. p. 177. &c. 2d part*) though he makes lit-

tle children in this verse to relate to Christians in common.

* Whether by *him that is from the beginning* we understand the Father, or the Son, which I have put both ways, leaving the reader to his choice, the apostle speaks of *the existence* of the person here intended as *from the beginning*, (*απ' αρχης*) which, in either case, was eternally before the beginning of the gospel. (*See the note on chap. i. 1.*)

I write them to those of you who are but newly born of God, or are like infants, who usually, first of all, learn to know and love their parents; because ye have been brought to a fiducial, affectionate knowledge of God, as your heavenly Father in and through his beloved Son. I have also wrote these things to those of you, who, like fathers, are far advanced in knowledge and grace, by means of your long study, observation, and experience, and who take pleasure in meditating upon the deep things of God; because ye have, with great judgment, faith, and love, understood much of him, and of his purposes and contrivances for your salvation; which, like himself, are from everlasting. (*Eph. i. 4.*) And I have wrote these things to those of you who, like young men, are grown up to maturity in spiritual growth and liveliness for action; because, being *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, (*2 Tim. iii. 1.*) and *strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*, (*Eph. iii. 16.*) ye are enabled to perform the most difficult duties, and the word of God, according to the gospel-revelation, has deep root, and continues to work effectually in you; (*1 Thess. ii. 13.*) and by wielding this sword of the Spirit, (*Eph. vi. 17.*) with the hand of faith, ye have defeated and gained signal conquests over the great enemy of your souls, and all his wicked instruments that would have perverted you.

13 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

15 But, whether your standing and progress in religion be more, or less, I would caution all and every one of you to take heed, that, in consistence with a subordinate love which is due to some persons and things, your affections be so weaned from, and mortified to this present evil world, as never to think that here is your rest; nor to be entangled with, engrossed by, or inordinately carried out after, any of its allurements, of what nature or kind soever, as though your portion for happiness lay in them. If there be any among you, whose heart is supremely set upon this world, he neither has any true love to God, the Father of Christ, and of all true believers in him, who will admit of no competitor or rival, (*Matth. vi. 24.*) and reckons *that* to be no true love to him at all, which is not supreme*; nor has such an one any claim to, or right sense of the love of God to him in his own soul.

16 For all that is in the world, the

16 For how enticing soever the things of this world be to the irregular desires of men's hearts; whether

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NOTE

* The love of the Father may relate either to his love to us, as in chap. iii. 16. and iv. 9. or to our love to him, as in chap. iii. 17. and v. 3.

the lust of the
flesh, and the lust
of the eyes, and
the pride of life,
is not of the Fa-
ther, but is of the
world.

And the world
passeth away, and
the lust thereof:
but he that doth
the will of God abideth for ever.

17 And the world
passeth away, and
the lust thereof:
but he that doth
the will of God abideth for ever.

18 Little chil-
dren, it is the last
time: and as ye
have heard that
antichrist shall
come, even now
are there many
antichrists; where-
by we know that
it is the last time.

18 Little chil-
dren, it is the last
time: and as ye
have heard that
antichrist shall
come, even now
are there many
antichrists; where-
by we know that
it is the last time.

18 Little chil-
dren, it is the last
time: and as ye
have heard that
antichrist shall
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are there many
antichrists; where-
by we know that
it is the last time.

whether its pleasures, that are suited to gratify lewd, intemperate, and luxurious inclinations; or its riches, estates, and possessions, that are looked upon with a greedy wish and covetous eye, which cannot be satisfied by them; (*Eccles. iv. 8.*) or its honours, dignities, and preferments, grand houses, furniture, and equipages, and the like, which feed the lust of ambition, and are very tempting to the natural pride of men's hearts, and carry them into all the vanity of a gay, pompous, and splendid way of living: So far forth as any of these are perverted, and prove ensnaring to the affections; this is not according to the original design of the Father of mercies in giving them; nor is it the product of his love to his children, or of theirs to him: No, nor can he be the approver, or author of it; but it all proceeds from the malignant influence of the things of this world upon men's carnal hearts, and their own corrupt inclinations to them.

17 And still further to arm you against all temptations, and take off all inordinate affections from things on earth, (*Col. iii. 2.*) ye ought to consider what an uncertain, unsatisfying, fading, and perishing thing this world is; that it is continually fleeting and changing hands while we are in it; and that even its best things are very precarious and transitory, and will soon come to an end; and so will all our present inclinations and desires towards it, and gratifications by its pleasures, riches, and honours, as we in a little time shall have nothing farther to do with it; (*1 Cor. vi. 13.* and *vii. 29.*—*31.*) and then all that set their hearts upon it shall perish with it. But the true lover of God, who is wrought into a conformity to his holy will, as made known in his word; and who, from a principle of faith, as working by love, persists in a governing course of obedience to it, is possessed of substantial, satisfying, and abiding realities; stands with everlasting continuance in the love of God, and in a state of grace; and shall live for ever in full possession of all durable and heavenly happiness.

18 My dearly beloved children, (see the note on *ver. 1.*) it is proper for me to remind you, that the Jewish dispensation is just now expiring, and the last dispensation of grace, which is to continue to the end of time, has now commenced: And as ye have been told in the predictions of our Lord and his apostles, (*Matth. xxiv. 11, 24, 25.* *2 Thess. ii. 3.*—*10.* and *1 Tim. iv. 1.*) that deceivers would arise and set themselves against him; even so, many of this malignant spirit are already risen up in the world, as forerunners

forerunners of the utter destruction of the Jewish temple and city, state and polity, and of that great-
 ed of all antichrists, who will assume the authority of
 Christ, and set himself up in opposition to him. (See
 the note on 2 *Thess.* ii. 4.) By this remarkable event,
 as it now begins to appear, we may be well assured
 that we are come to the very last hour of the Jewish
 state, and are entered upon the last dispensation of
 mercy, that God will ever afford to this sinful world;
 and so may be the better confirmed in the truth of
 those divine predictions, and the better fortified a-
 gainst the errors of these seducers, who make a pro-
 fession of Christianity to cover their vile designs, but
 are really apostates from it.

19 They went
 out from us, but
 they were not of
 us: for if they had
 been of us, they
 would no doubt
 have continued
 with us: but they
 went out, that
 they might be
 made manifest,
 that they were not
 all of us.

19 They, for a while, made plausible appearances
 of being sincere converts, and were in communion
 with the churches of Christ; and afterward depart-
 ed from the faith, and went out from amongst us to
 broach their corrupt notions; but they really never
 were in good earnest of the same mind and heart with
 us: For if they had been true believers, renewed by
 grace, and of the same spirit with ourselves, there is
 no question to be made, but that they would still
 have persevered in the doctrines of Christ and his ap-
 ostles, and continued in communion with us. But
 they revolted from the faith and fellowship of the
 gospel, and separated themselves that they might ap-
 pear to the church and the world in their true co-
 lours, for a warning to some, a caution to others,
 and a brand of infamy upon themselves, as mere hy-
 pocrites or false-hearted professors, which too often
 creep into the visible church; and that, under all their
 flourishing pretences, it might be known that none
 of their fraternity were true believers, vitally united
 to Christ together with us.

20 But ye have
 an unction from
 the holy One, and
 ye know all things.

20 But as to those of you that have not been car-
 ried away with their errors, ye have a rich unction of
 the Spirit in his gifts and graces, which belongs to
 you, as *kings and priests unto God*, (*Rev.* i. 6.) and
 is shed abundantly upon you through Jesus Christ,
 your exalted Saviour, who is by way of eminence *the*
Holy One, (*Dan.* ix. 24. *Acts* iii. 14. and *Rev.* iii.
 7.) and who, as mediator and head of the church,
 was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure;
 (*John* iii. 34. and *Acts* x. 38.) and, in virtue of his
 death and ascension to heaven, communicates light
 and grace, according to the measure of his gift, to all
 his living members: (*Eph.* iv. 7.) And ye through
 this spiritual anointing, are led into an experimental
 and practical knowledge of every thing that is neces-
 sary

21 I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth: but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? he is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.)

sary for your preservation from the deceit of these seducers, and for your own eternal salvation.

21 The reason, therefore of my having wrote to you on this head, is not from any suspicion as though ye were unacquainted with the truth of the gospel, and particularly with its grand fundamental doctrine, concerning Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, (*ver. 22.*) which your unction supposes ye cannot be ignorant of; but the reason of my writing is to remind you of, and still further confirm and establish you in the truth, which I do with the greatest pleasure and confidence of success, because ye already know, believe, and prize it; and are well assured that nothing contrary to it can be true, and that no fraud, deceit, or error, like what these impostors go into, can proceed from it, or be consistent with it, but is as contrary to the pure gospel, as any lie can be to truth itself.

22 Who, of all others, is to be deemed an impostor, cheat, and false teacher, but he who denies our Lord Jesus to be *come in the flesh*, (see the note on chap. iv. 3.) as the true Messiah, whom the prophets foretold, and he declared himself to be, with the attestation of miracles to confirm it, and whom God his Father publicly owned as such? (*Matth. iii. 17.*) That man is to be looked upon, as one that directly opposes Christ, and deservedly bears the name of *antichrist*, who, notwithstanding all this strong and complicated evidence, denies the Father, as *the Father*; and the Son, as *the Son*; and denies that God the Father has sent him into the world as the promised Messiah, and his beloved Son.

23 Whoever he be that denies the divine personality and mediatorial office of the only begotten Son of God, (*chap. iv. 9. and John i. 1, 14.*) he denies, not only the Father's testimony to him, as the Messiah, but also, by consequence, denies the Father's divine relation to him as *the Son*; and so takes away the distinguishing *personal* characters of both, and the peculiar glory which belongs to them respectively in the economy of salvation; and has not a true knowledge of the Father, nor a saving interest in him. * But, on the contrary, he who cordially owns, believes, and confesses the Son to be a divine person, and the only Saviour of lost sinners, believes and owns that he is the eternal Son of the Father, and was sent by him;

NOTE

* The last part of this verse, which stands in different characters, is wanting in most Greek copies, but is supplied from some others of good credit, and from several versions; and is reasonably suppo-

sed to have been dropt, through carelessness, where it is left out, rather than suffered into the text by a wickedly designed interpolation. Vide *Ber. Est.* and *Mill.* in loc.

and so has a due regard, and pays suitable honour both to the Father and the Son, (*John* v. 23.) and has a right knowledge of the Father, and an interest in his special love and favour through the Son.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

24 See to it therefore that the true doctrine of Christ concerning his Father and himself, be still embraced by you, and fixed as an abiding principle in your hearts, even that doctrine, which ye have been instructed in from the very first publication of the gospel to you. If ye continue to hold *that* fast, and retain it as the engrafted word of God, which ye heard and received at your first acquaintance with the gospel, ye shall prove to be, not merely Christians by visible profession; but shall also abide by faith and love in union and communion with the Son, and with the Father through him, to your complete salvation.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

25 And the grand comprehensive promise, to which all others tend, and in which they shall finally issue, and which Jesus Christ, and the Father through him, has made in the gospel, and will certainly fulfil to us, who thus abide in the Father and Son, is no less than an everlasting life of all perfection and glory, which shall be enjoyed in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, and in the most intimate beatific union and communion with them, all blissful and transporting!

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

26 I thought it proper to give you these hints about, and to establish, comfort, and fortify you against persons of an antichristian-spirit, that have already rose up among you, and are endeavouring by subtle and deceitful artifices to corrupt your principles and practice, and to draw you away from the simplicity that is in Christ. (*2 Cor.* xi. 3.)

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any man teach you: But as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie; and even as it hath taught

27 But I need not insist so largely upon these things, as I otherwise might, because that *unction*, (*ver.* 20.) consisting of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which ye have been favoured with, remains as a constant principle within you, to enlighten, guide, and govern you; so that there is no necessity of your being instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God, (*Heb.* vi. 1.) by any man whomsoever; * much less of your being taught by any of these new upstarts, that would carry you off from the pure gospel of Christ:

NOTE

* *Ye need not that any man teach you* cannot be said with a design of excluding the use of ministerial instruction; for the apostle was at this very time giving it to them. (See the note on *Heb.* viii. 11.) But it either relates to their having need to be taught the fundamental

doctrines of the gospel, which they were already well acquainted with; or rather, as I think, to their having no need to be taught any doctrines of Christian religion by these false pretenders to it, who industriously set themselves to pervert it.

taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Christ: But as this holy unction itself leads you into the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, and is infallibly true, according to the word of God, which is *truth*, (John xvii. 17.) and has no deceit or falsehood in it; and as it has already been effectual to bring you to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, so by means of its continual influence upon you, ye shall still remain stedfast in Christ, and in the doctrines of his gospel.

23 And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

28 And now, to conclude what I have to say upon this head, my dear little children, take heed that ye still adhere to Christ, and abide by the pure doctrine of the gospel concerning him, and by your holy profession of his name, that when he shall appear in all his glory, *the second time, without sin unto salvation*, (Heb. ix. 28.) we, who have ministered the gospel to you, may have the satisfaction of seeing the happy fruit of our labours among you, and may not be disappointed in our hopes concerning you; and that ye yourselves may have boldness, together with us, before him, and not be confounded in the day of judgment; but may be *our glory and crown of rejoicing*, which will be to your own exceeding joy, *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming.* (1 Thel. ii. 19, 20.)

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness, is born of him.

29 This is the hope we have concerning you now; and since, (see) as we trust, ye have right thoughts of Christ, as the righteous and holy One, who *loves righteousness and hates iniquity*, (Psal. xlv. 7.) and is the author of all righteousness in others, wherever it is found; ye may from thence assuredly conclude, with an application to yourselves, that every one, who, like him, is a lover and practiser of those things that are right and holy, in imitation of him, and from a principle of faith in, and love to him, is partaker of a divine nature, by his regenerating Spirit, and so is by the new birth, as well as by gracious adoption, (*chap. iii. 1.*) a child of God, and heir of eternal glory. (Rom. viii. 14,—17.)

REC O L L E C T I O N S.

How beautifully harmonious is the tendency and design of the gospel, to caution believers against all sin, and to support them under a humbling sense of their former iniquities, and of their present disallowed infirmities! The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and his advocacy founded upon it, are extended to all believing sinners of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*, through the whole world. But how vainly do any pretend to have a right knowledge of Christ, or true faith in him for their own salvation, if they cast off a conscientious regard to his commandments! They give the lie to their own profession, and to the truth itself, and have no sincere love to him, which would engage them to a holy imitation of him.—The law of love to his people is, for substance, an old commandment, but, for circumstances, suited to the light and grace of the gospel, is a new one; and whatever any one may pretend to, his loving his Christian brother, or not, is a plain test of his

either being truly enlightened, or remaining under the power of darkness. O how happy is their condition, who walk in the light of truth and holiness, whether they be babes, young men, or fathers in Christ! The weakest believer is forgiven all trespasses for Christ's sake, and has a filial affection to God as his Father; the more grown Christian is established in the faith, and has strength from Christ for vanquishing the temptations of the devil and his instruments; and the old experienced Christian is best acquainted with the *Ancient of Days*, and his eternal counsels of wisdom and love. But alas! What an enemy is the love of this world to the love of God! As far as we are carried away with pleasures, riches, or honours, which are all precarious, empty, and perishing, so far are we estranged from the love of God to us; and a predominant love of this world is inconsistent with a true love to him, who cannot be the author of any evil influence that the things of flesh and sense make upon us.—How dangerous are the schemes of men of an anti-Christian spirit, which has worked in all ages of the church! When professors of Christ's name go into it; this makes it evident that they never were sincere believers; for they would otherwise undoubtedly have persisted in the faith and fellowship of the gospel. But O what a blessed and holy unction of the Spirit have true believers from their exalted Head and Saviour: By this they are well satisfied about the truth of all the fundamental articles of the gospel, inasmuch that they do not need to be always taught the first rudiments of Christianity; much less to be taught any of its doctrines by false pretenders to it. All that deny Jesus to be the Son of God and the only Saviour, are *antichristians*, and constructively deny both the Father and Son; but all that cordially believe the doctrine, originally delivered in the gospel concerning these divine persons, have a sure interest in them both. The great promise of eternal life belongs to them; and they, being enabled to persist in their most holy faith, continue in union and communion with Christ, to their own and their faithful pastor's joy and confidence, at his second and most glorious appearing: And they that have such just and impressive sentiments of his purity and holiness, as produce an effectual change upon them in resemblance of him, may certainly conclude that they are partakers of a new and spiritual birth from him, and have the inheritance of children, even unto eternal life.

C H A P . III.

The apostle breaks out into admiration of the love of God in making believers his children, 1, 2. Shews the purifying influence of a hope of seeing Christ and bearing his likeness, and the inconsistency of pretending to this hope, and living in sin, 3,—10. Makes love to the brethren, a distinguishing character of real Christians, 11,—15. Describes that love by such of its actions, as prove it to a man's own conscience to be sincere, 16,—21. And represents the advantage of faith, love, and obedience, 22,—24.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it saw him not.

BEHOLD, with attention and admiration, gratitude, joy and praise, what an affecting and distinguishing sort of free and transcendent love the eternal Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of mercies in and through him, has vouchsafed to us, who are born of God, (*chap. ii. 29.*) that, in the riches of his condescension and grace, he should put such a high honour upon us, who are in ourselves altogether worthless, mean, vile, and contemptible sinners, both by nature and practice, as to adopt us

into his family, that we might not only bear the name, but enjoy all the blessings and privileges, which, answerable to our dignity, belong to the regenerated sons of God; (*John i. 12, 13.*) and might be accounted, owned, and dealt with, as such. It need not therefore be wondered at, (*ver. 13.*) that the men of this world, whose hearts are carnal, and averse to all that is good and holy, do not esteem, affect, and own, but rather hate us, who bear his image; because they are ignorant of the true nature of God, and neither approve of, nor acknowledge either the Father, or the Son. (*Chap. ii. 23.*)*

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.

2 But let them think and speak of us as they will; this, beloved of the Lord, and therefore of me, is our comfort and glory, that though our natural, and lamented sinful infirmities be great and many, and the figure we make in life be ever so mean and despicable, and they revile and hate us, yet we actually are already the sons of God, not by nature, as our blessed Lord is, nor merely by creation, as the holy angels are; (*Job xxxviii. 7.*) but by the special grace of regeneration and adoption, and of marriage-union with his essential Son: And so great is the dignity and happiness of this relation, that it is impossible for us, much more for the men of this world, to conceive what sublime riches, honours, and delights we shall hereafter be advanced to, answerable to it. But thus far we know in the light of faith, and by the witness of the Spirit, according to the word of God, that when our glorious Lord himself shall appear the second time to salvation, *we shall appear with him in glory*; (*Col. iii. 4.*) and shall bear his amiable and illustrious image of light and love, holiness and happiness in our souls; and even *our bodies themselves shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body*: (*Phil. iii. 21.*) For we shall be admitted to a beatific and transforming vision, *not in a glass darkly, but face to face*; (*1 Cor. xiii. 12.*) and shall see and enjoy him in his divine and mediatorial glory, as shining forth in his exalted

NOTE

* As to *know* often signifies to approve; so *not to know* signifies to disapprove. (See the notes on *Matth. vii. 23.* and *Rom. viii. 29.*) And it *knew him* not seems to refer to Christ, and the ill treatment he met with in the world, on account of which he said to his disciples, (*John xv. 18, 19.*) *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but*

I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. This is parallel to, and casts a light upon, the passage before us, and in *ver. 13.*; and might probably be in the apostle's mind now: And in the following verses, which are immediately connected with this, he manifestly speaks of Christ, pointing him out in such a manner, as necessarily leads our thoughts to him. (See the note on *chap. ii. 3.*)

exalted human nature just as he is. (*John* xvii. 24. see the note on 2 *Cor.* iii. 18.)

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3 And every believer, who has a well-grounded hope of all this, cannot but be influenced by it, while he is in this world, to aim at and endeavour, through divine grace, to attain all possible purity in heart and life, in imitation of, and conformity to him, who is superlatively pure and holy, and will admit of none but holy ones to see his face with comfort. (*Heb.* vii. 26. and xii. 14.)

4 Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

4 Whoever he be that lives in any known sin, as a willful evil-doer, or worker of iniquity, (*ὁ ποιῶν ἀμαρτίαν*, see the note on *ver.* 6.) that man not only sinneth against the light, grace, and obligations of the gospel; but, as though he were lawless, goes into a manifest violation even of the moral law, which is holy, just, and good: For the strict and proper notion of sin is a deviation from, or contrariety in thought, word, or deed to, the law of God, that unchangeable rule of righteousness, which is a transcript of his holy nature and will; and *where no law is, there is no transgression.* (*Rom.* iv. 15.)

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin.

5 And that the allowed practice of any sin is utterly inconsistent with good hope of seeing Christ, and being like him, at his second coming, is evident; for ye know from the whole tenor of the gospel, that he was manifested in the flesh at his first appearing, (*inc.*) to this very end and purpose, that by the sacrifice of himself he might effectually deliver us from the guilt, and, in consequence thereof, from the power, and, at length, from all defilement and in-being of our sins: And he is, and ever was, so absolutely sinless, as to need no expiation for himself, and as to have no fellowship with them that walk in darkness. (*Chap.* i. 6.)

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

6 From hence it plainly follows, that whoever abides in him by vital and influential union and communion with him, as all true believers do, like branches in the vine, (*John* xv. 5.) doth not deliberately, habitually, presumptuously, and willingly sin*: He

T 2

N O T E

* We are not to imagine the apostle's meaning to be, that a true Christian never sins; for this would be to make him directly contradict what he had said, *chap.* i. 8, 9. about *deceiving ourselves, if we say we have no sin*, and about the duty of *confessing our sin*, which supposes us to have occasion to do so; and and therefore *he sinneth not* must be understood in some such sense, as is given in the paraphrase; and is sufficiently ex-

plained in several other verses of this context, which we render *committeth sin*, but the expressions in the *Greek* (*ἁμαρτάνω*, and *ποιῶν ἀμαρτίαν*) are very strong, and signify committing it as *practisers, workers, or doers* of it with freedom and choice, like persons who make a trade of it; and it is the very same expression that our Lord used when he said, (*John* viii. 34.) *Whosoever committeth sin (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν) is the servant of sin;* and

that sinneth at this rate, has never had any realizing view by faith of him; nor any experimental and saving acquaintance or communion with him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

7 Take heed, my dear children, that no false pretenders impose upon you, and lead you astray from the path of truth and duty: Set it down as a certain conclusion, that he, and he only, who, from principles of faith and love, conscientiously and habitually works righteousness (*ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*) in his religious behaviour toward God, and upright dealings with men, is both inherently and actively righteous, according to his measure and degree, in imitation of the blessed Jesus, who is the *holy One*, (see the paraphrase on chap. ii. 20.) and loves righteousness, as well as spent his whole life on earth in an invariable practice of it.

8 He that committeth sin, is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

8 He who works iniquity, as one that makes a trade of it, (see the note on *ver. 6.*) is under the power and influence of the devil, bears his odious likeness, and doth his will: For that great enemy of God and souls is an old offender, persisting in a course of all iniquity himself, and practising the wicked art of tempting and exciting others to sin, ever since the beginning of the world, when he sinned, and drew other apostate angels into sin, as also our first parents into their horrible defection from God and his law, to the ruin of themselves, and all their natural offspring in their several generations. And this is so directly contrary to every thing, said and done, or countenanced by Christ, that he, the eternal Son of God, came into the world, and was made known in his saving office, as sent of the Father to this great end and design, that, by his doctrine, obedience, and sufferings unto death, he might dissolve the whole frame of those evil works, sin, misery, and death natural, spiritual, and eternal, which the devil propagates, and carries on, that they, who believe in Christ Jesus, and hope to live with him, and to be like him for ever, (*ver. 2.*) might be delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin, and live no longer in it here; and might, at length, be entirely freed from all remainders of it, and from all its dreadful fruits and effects, for ever hereafter.

9 Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because

9 The sum then of what I am saying is this, Whosoever he be that is partaker of a divine nature, by the regenerating Spirit, is no longer a doer or worker of iniquity, like other men, or like the devil, who *sinneth from the beginning*: (*ver. 8.*) For that divine principle

NOTE.

and our apostle says, *ver. 8.* He that committeth sin (*ὁ ἁμαρτάνων*) is of the devil, and *ver. 10.* whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, (*ἁμαρτάνει*).

because he is born
of God.

principle of grace, which is infused into him, by means of the incorruptible seed of the word, (1 *Pet.* i. 23.) has an abiding root and residence in him, to rule and govern him; and he has such a thorough hatred of all iniquity, that he cannot give himself liberty to sin with deliberation and full consent, as he used to do; (see the note on *ver.* 6.) he cannot love and live in sin; and when, through temptation, surprise, or inadvertence, he at any time falls into it, he cannot but, upon conviction, sorely repent of it, as *David* and *Peter* did, because he, as a child of God, and born of the Spirit, has received a principle of grace, that wills and works in direct opposition to all sin, as sin; (*Gal.* v. 17.) much less can he sin upon the score, or by virtue of his being born of God, as though his new birth were a licence for it, or had any tendency towards it.

to In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

10 This therefore is the great distinguishing difference, by which they who are truly born of God, and so become his children, and they who are still under the power of the devil, as their Father, to do his works, and live according to his will, (*John viii. 44.*) are openly discovered, known, and proved to be so respectively. Let people's pretences be what they will, it is certain, that whosoever doth not love, and live in the practice of religion and morality, both which may be included in the notion of righteousness, is not born of God, or partaker of the nature of his children; no more is he, who has not a sincere and cordial affection toward his Christian brother, as such.

11 For this is
the message that
ye heard from the
beginning, that we
should love one a-
nother.

11 For this is one great part of that practical doctrine, which our blessed Lord committed as a charge to us, his apostles and servants, and which we preached, and ye heard and received from the very first publication of the gospel, relating to what he requires of his disciples and followers, (*John* xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17.) that we, who claim relation to him, and interest in him, should maintain a brotherly affection, and discover it in the best manner, and by all suitable endearments and services, one towards another.

12 Not as Cain,
who was of that
wicked one, and
flew his brother :
and wherefore flew
he him? because
his own works
were evil, and his
brother's righte-
ous.

12 We are by no means to be like *Cain*, the first-born of our fallen parents, and among all their descendants the first notorious child of the devil, *that eminently wicked and malicious murderer from the beginning of the world*; (*John viii. 44.*) and under the power of whose malignant influence, as he *works in the children of disobedience*, (*Eph. ii. 2.*) *Cain* cruelly murdered his brother *Abel*. And what was the reason of his contriving and committing that monstrously unlawful and barbarous act of violence against him? Why, truly, it was only because he himself

was a wicked wretch, and, his services not being duly performed, God rejected both him and them; and because his brother was a righteous man, and his sacrifice, offered with faith in the Messiah's atonement, was good and acceptable in the sight of God, who had a respect to him and his offering, and shewed it in such a manner, as testified that he was righteous, (*Gen. iv. 3,—8.* and *Heb. xi. 4.* see the note there.)

13 Ye need not therefore wonder, or count it a new or strange thing, my dear brethren, if, as is the case of the present day, the wicked men of this world, who are the seed of the serpent, envy, hate, and persecute you, who are the seed of the woman, between whom and them there is an irreconcilable enmity, (*Gen. iii. 15.*) which soon discovered itself in *Cain*, (*ver. 12.*) and has worked ever since in the children of disobedience.

14 We, through grace, are men of a better spirit, and may be very easy under all the hatred of this world, since God himself loves us, (*ver. 1.*) and since we are translated from a state of law-condemnation to death into a state of justification to eternal life; and are quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness: We are well assured that this is our happy case, because our hearts are formed unto an affectionate love of all our brethren in the faith, hope, and fellowship of the gospel, merely upon this consideration, that they belong to Christ, bear his image, and are beloved of him. Whoever, on the contrary, is not effectually engaged from such principles and motives to love his brother in the profession of the gospel, continues still under the power of spiritual death, and in a state of law-condemnation, and lies exposed to everlasting destruction, which is the *second death*. (*Rev. xx. 14.*)

15 Let his pretences be what they will, every one who, instead of cultivating this Christian temper toward his brother, indulges wrath, malice, envy, and revenge, is guilty of the sin of murdering him in his heart; (*Matth. v. 21, 22.*) and such is the rancour of his malignant spirit, that were it left to take its own course, and had it opportunity, it would as surely carry him on to actual murder itself as *Cain's* did. (*ver. 12.*) And ye know, from all that the word of God says, that no person, who is under the power of such a wicked disposition, much less an actual murderer, who either has not time, or not a heart for repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, which are necessary to salvation, (*Acts xx. 20, 21.*) has any right or title to eternal life, or any principle of spiritual life residing in him, or any

giving grace, which is the beginning of, and a meet-
ness for, and shall continue to, and issue in eternal
life.

16 Hereby per-
ceive we the love
of God, because he
laid down his life
for us: and we
ought to lay down
our lives for the
brethren.

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16 How contrary is this unmerciful temper to that,
which God the Son has shewn towards us; we may
conceive something of the greatness of his compassion-
ate love, from the most transcendent instance that
could be given of it; since he, who is *the eternal
Word, and was made flesh*, and so was truly and pro-
perly God incarnate, (*John i. 1, 14.*) *has loved us
and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice
to God for a sweet-smelling savour*, (*Eph. v. 2.*) and
freely gave his life a ransom for many. (*Matth. xx.
28.*) And we ought to be so deeply affected with,
and influenced by this unparalleled love of Christ, as
to stand ready after his example, and in imitation of
his love, to expose our own lives, whenever he calls
us to it, (as the apostle *Paul* did his, *Phil. ii. 17.*)
for encouraging the faith and hope of those holy bre-
thren, that have cost him so much, and are so dear to
him; and for the preservation and safety of those that
are eminently serviceable to his church, (as *Aquila
and Priscilla, laid down their own necks for that
great apostle's life.* *Rom. xvi. 4.*)

17 But whose
hath this world's
good, and seeth
his brother have
need, and shutteth
up his bowels of
compassion from
him, how dwelleth
the love of God in
him.

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17 But if, instead of copying after this noble pat-
tern of love, any professor of Christ's name, who,
through the bounty of Providence, has the conveni-
ences and comforts of this life, see his neighbour, and
especially his Christian-brother, in strait and necessi-
tous circumstances, and harden his heart against him;
and, like one that has no tenderness or pity for the
distressed, will give him no relief, how scandalously
short doth he fall of that love, which God requires,
and has given the most affecting example of in his
Son? How can such an one pretend to an interest in
God's love to him, or that the sincere love which God
enjoins, and is the author and the object of, and which
inclines the heart to a fervent love of the brethren for
his sake, has any place in him? (*1 Jam. ii. 15, 16.*)

18 My little
children, let us
not love in word,
neither in tongue,
but in deed, and in
truth.

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18 Let us take heed, my dear children, that our
professions of love to our fellow-Christians be *without
dissimulation*; (*Rom. xii. 9.*) that it be not all com-
pliment without any meaning, nor merely kind ex-
pressions, without any suitable affection toward them,
or doing what we can for their help and comfort in
spiritual and temporal concerns; but let it demon-
strate itself in acts of beneficence and service as occa-
sions require, and in all offices of substantial friendship,
according to our professions, and the true nature of
Christian charity.

19 And

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because

19 And by a prevalence of this excellent temper and conduct, we may be well satisfied that *God of his own will has begotten us with the word of truth*, (Jam. i. 18.) and has brought us to understand, believe, and live under the government of the true principles of the gospel, as sincere Christians; and hereupon we shall be enabled to persuade (*πεισεν*) our own hearts, that we have such manifest tokens and fruits of his effectual operation upon us, as will embolden our humble appeal to him for our integrity, in his sight and presence, both now and at the day of judgment, whatever censures the world may pass upon us: And this is a sweet and solid joy that frees us from the stinging reproaches of a self-condemning conscience. (2 Cor. i. 12.)

20 For if our consciences, which are *the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly*, (Prov. xx. 27.) witness against, accuse, and condemn us for designed or allowed hypocrisy in our professions of love, and of adherence to the truth of the gospel, it is very awful to consider, as we ought, that the heart-searching God is an infinitely higher, more impartial, and critical judge of the true state of our case, and is greater in purity and holiness, as well as in power, to condemn all iniquity, than our own hearts can be; and it is most dreadful of all to be disapproved of him, whose judgment must and will stand for ever, and who has a perfectly comprehensive knowledge of all things, even of the most secret thoughts and intents of the heart. (1 Kings viii. 39. and Rev. ii. 23.) And therefore he not only confirms the sentence which conscience justly passes in his name; but sees and condemns many things in us, that escape our own observation.

21 But, on the contrary, my dearly beloved, if, while we cannot but be sensible of many lamented imperfections, our own consciences, upon due deliberation, under the enlightenings and witnessings of the Spirit, according to the truth of the gospel, acquit us from all charges of reigning or allowed guile; then, in proportion to our consciousness of this, we may have humble boldness in our claim of God as our God and Father, and in our professions of love to him and our fellow-Christians for his sake, and in an appeal to him, like that of *Peter*, (John xxi. 17.) about the sincerity of our hearts therein; yea, we may have (*παρρησια*) a holy freedom, courage, and liberty of soul in our fiducial pleas with him.

22 And what good things soever we sincerely and humbly pray for according to his will, with faith in the name of Jesus, and for right ends, (*chap. v. 14*)

John

because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

John xiv. 13, 14. xvi. 23. and *Jam.* iv. 3.) we are, or in due time shall be partakers of them by his free favour, through his beloved Son, as far as he sees may be most for his glory, and best for us: And we, with holy *David*, (*Pl.* cxix. 6.) may be humbly confident of this; because, as an evidence of our interest in his favour, we, through the grace bestowed upon us, have an unfeigned respect to all his commandments, and endeavour to do such things as are acceptable and well pleasing in his sight, by Jesus Christ. (*1 Pet.* ii. 5.)

23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

23 And this is the great commandment of God, which is fundamental to, and comprehensive of all the rest, that we should heartily embrace and trust in his Son Jesus Christ for ourselves, according to the gospel-revelation of him, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of lost sinners; and that from this principle of faith in him, as also for proving the truth of it in its working by love, (*Gal.* v. 6.) we should have, and exercise a cordial affection one towards another, as members together of his mystical body, in obedience to the commandment, which he gave to all his disciples. (*John* xiii. 34. and xv. 12.)

24 And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

24 And whoever is brought to yield a conscientious obedience to all his commandments, from a principle of faith as working by love, which counts none of them grievous, (*chap.* v. 3.) he really doth, and hereby makes it evident that he doth live in a state of vital union with him, and with the Father through him, and that *Christ dwells in his heart by faith*, who is a habitation of God through the Spirit: (*Eph.* ii. 22. and iii. 17.) And we who stand in this near and happy relation to Christ, and to the Father through him, are assured that he lives with abiding influence in us, by the light, energy, and witness of the Holy Spirit, which he has freely given us, to produce, excite, and assist an exercise of faith and love, and every other grace in our souls.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Who can sufficiently admire, and be affected with the love of God in making such contemptible, ill-deserving creatures as we are, his children by special grace! Though the men of this world despise and hate them, they are already the Sons of God. And who can conceive the dignity and delights which they will be advanced to, when they shall see Christ in all his glory, and be made as like as possible to him! O the happiness of a well-grounded hope of this for ourselves; and of an experience of its purifying effects upon us! These appear in the holy turn that is given to our hearts and lives by a principle of grace, which works in direct opposition to all iniquity, and excites us to all the duties of piety toward God, and righteousness toward men, and to an imitation of the righteous and holy Jesus, who as himself absolutely sinless, and was manifested in our nature to take away our sin, and to destroy the works of the devil, that wicked offender, murderer, and promoter of sin and ruin from the beginning of the world.—Of all the divine commandments, faith and love are the chief; faith as working by love; and love as taking pleasure in keeping every other commandment. And O how important

is it, that, from these noble principles, we affectionately love our Christian brethren, as such; and *that* not in word only, but in deed and in truth, even unto a readiness, if need be, to lay down our lives for their preservation and confirmation in the faith, as Christ, who was truly and properly God incarnate, laid down his own life in his matchless love for our redemption. By these distinguishing characters, and by his Spirit given to us, we may know that we are passed from death to life, and that he abides in us, and we in him; and may be humbly confident toward God, that we have a saving acquaintance with the truth of the gospel; that we are sincere in our profession of it, and are born of God; and that he, in his own time and way, will give us whatsoever we ask of him according to his will. But, alas! How vain are all pretences to these glorious privileges and blessings, if none of the forementioned dispositions, but the contrary prevail in us! If we habitually live in a course of any known sin, as evil-doers; if we are not practisers of righteousness, and, instead of loving, hate the children of God, and *that* because they are more righteous and holy than ourselves; and, instead of having bowels of compassion toward them, or relieving their wants, we could willingly persecute them, even unto death, as *Cain* did his righteous brother *Abel*. How can we pretend to have any love to God; or that we are his sons, born of him, or have any true knowledge of him, or any principle of spiritual and eternal life, which no murderer in heart, much less in fact, can have in him? No, no, Let not any man deceive us: These things evidently mark out the children of the devil, in distinction from the children of God; and all such continue under the power of spiritual death, in opposition to them that have eternal life. How much therefore doth it concern every one of us to inquire, in which of these ranks we stand? Whether our consciences acquit, or condemn us in the judgment they pass, upon serious deliberation, about our own state, temper, and way before God? And O how careful ought we to be in forming that judgment concerning ourselves, since the infinitely great and holy God, who knows our hearts, is the supreme Judge of all; and by his judgment we must stand or fall for ever!

C H A P. IV.

The apostle cautions believers against giving heed to every one that pretends to the Spirit, and shews how to distinguish the true from the false claimants of it, 1,—6. Then returns to his darling topic of brotherly love, as a proper characteristic of sincere Christians, enforcing it upon them by various weighty considerations, 7,—21.

TEXT.

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

PARAPHRASE.

TAKE heed, dearly beloved, to whom God has given his Spirit, (*chap. iii. 24.*) that ye hearken not to, and be not seduced by every pretender to the Spirit of God, nor by every doctrine, (*ver. 2, 3.*) that he broaches under colour of extraordinary light and immediate revelation; but, before ye give any credit to, and fall in with those that make such high professions, carefully examine, and prove by the touchstone of the word, (*Isa. viii. 20.*) what manner of spirit they are of, and are are influenced by, and what doctrines they preach; whether they carry plain tokens of their being such, as are agreeable to the holy nature and revealed will of God, and derive their original from him or not. And there is great need of your being very cautious on this head; because

there are swarms of impostors at this day, who, according to our Lord's prediction, are gone abroad, and make a great noise in the world, endeavouring (*if it were possible*) to deceive the very elect. (Matth. xxiv. 24.)

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.

2 Now, to give you a certain mark, whereby ye may know who are taught and inspired by the Spirit of God, and who are not, but are acted by a spirit of delusion, or would fallaciously impose upon you; it is necessary for you to observe, that every one, who, under professions of preaching by the light and inspiration of the Spirit, cordially believes, freely owns, and boldly professes his faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the eternal Word, who is God, and the only begotten of the Father, and has actually been made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, (*John i. 1, 14. see the notes there*) * and came into an incarnate state to fulfil all righteousness, and take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and is to be entirely trusted in, as the only true Messiah, for eternal life; such an one really is what he professes to be, and speaks by the authority and inspiration of God according to his mind and will, and is himself born of God.

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.

3 And, on the contrary, every pretender to preach by the inspiration of the Spirit, that does not believe and own, but denies that Jesus Christ is the only true Messiah, who, as the eternal Son of God, has assumed a real human body, as well as reasonable soul, and taken upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient unto death, (*Phil. ii. 7, 8.*) for the redemption of his people; such an one is neither sent, nor approved of God, nor enlightened by his Spirit, nor born of him; And the spirit by which he is governed, is that very spirit of opposition to Christ and his gospel, concerning which ye have heard from our Lord and his apostles, as has been already hinted, (*chap. ii. 18. see the paraphrase there*) that it would rise and show itself in the last days; and it has now actually begun to appear and work in the world among the impostors of this day.

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NOTE

* Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, (*πας πνευμα ομολογει Ιησυν Χριστον εν σαρκι εληλυθοντα*) might be more justly rendered every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ, who has come in the flesh; and so Christ himself is the subject of the confession in all his characters, and not barely that particular assertion, that he is come in the flesh, which I take to be only such a descrip-

tion of him, as is indeed essential to, and included in, though it be not the whole of, what is to be confessed concerning him: And they who, on the contrary, deny that Christ came to offer up himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and make atonement for sin, do, in effect, deny him to be come in the flesh for the main purpose for which God, his Father, sent him.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world,

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every

4 But ye, my dear children, are born of God, and are taught by *the unction* which ye have received from the holy One, even by the spirit which he has given you, (chap. ii. 20, 27. and iii. 24.) that ye might not be carried away by their delusions; and ye have been enabled to withstand these impostors, and their errors in doctrine and practice, and to gain a noble conquest over them, by the steadfastness of your faith, profession, and obedience; and ye will still be more than a match for them all, because he, who dwells in you by his Spirit, is infinitely superior, in wisdom and power, to that antichristian spirit which is gone forth into the world, and to Satan himself, under whom it acts, and who *works in the children of disobedience.* (Eph. ii. 2.)

5 These deceivers that think, talk, and act under his influence, are men of carnal minds, *who walk according to the course of this world;* (Eph. ii. 2.) whose views and interests are all of a temporal nature, relating to the riches, honours, and pleasures of this present evil world: They therefore propagate such notions of secular dominion and grandeur under the Messiah, as are agreeable to men of a like worldly temper with themselves; and unregenerate people, who place their happiness in the things of this world, hearken to them, and greedily suck in their corrupt doctrines, as being most suitable, of all others, to their own sensual inclination and taste.

6 But we, who preach an incarnate and crucified Saviour, are enlightened, approved, sent, and owned, as well as born of God; and therefore every one that truly knows any thing of God, and is well affected toward him, according to the discoveries he has made of himself in Christ by the gospel, diligently attends to, and heartily embraces the divine truths, which we have received by revelation from him: But he that is not born of God, by his enlightening and renewing influence, pays no regard to the spiritual doctrine we deliver concerning Christ, as the only true Messiah, who is come in the flesh; (*ver. 3.*) nor will believe or adhere to us who preach it. This is a distinguishing character, whereby we may easily and clearly discern, on one hand, the Spirit of truth and its preachers, and on the other, the spirit of falsehood and delusion, and what an evil spirit they are under the power of, who propagate antichristian errors, and wicked practices according to them.

7 Now, to return to what I greatly aim at in this epistle, Let it be our diligent care, beloved of the Lord, and therefore of me, to maintain, express, and shew forth the most sincere and brotherly affection one to-

wards

ry one that loveth,
is born of God, and
knoweth God.

8 He that loveth
not, knoweth not
God; for God is
love.

9 In this was
manifested the love
of God towards us,
because that God
sent his only be-
gotten Son into
the world, that we
might live through
him.

10 Herein is
love, not that we
loved God, but
that he loved us,
and sent his Son
to be the propitia-
tion for our sins.

wards another: For this excellent grace is the fruit of the Spirit, the birth and offspring of God himself, who begets, commands, and approves of it. And every one that cultivates and exemplifies this amiable principle, is a child of God, regenerated by his Spirit; and has an experimental, appropriating, and transforming knowledge of the perfections and will of God, and particularly of his love.

8 He, on the contrary, that is a stranger to this Christian love, is unacquainted with the nature and will of God. For God * is all love, he is the perfection of it in his propensions, thoughts, purposes, and dispensations of every kind, as though he were nothing but love toward his children, and in his will to promote a like affection in them to one another: He therefore is a complete pattern of it, worthy of our imitation, though it is absolutely impossible for us to come up to any thing near an equality to him in it, as appears, if we only consider the following eminent demonstration of it.

9 The astonishing, self-moving, and condescending love of the great God to us broke out, and was displayed with the brightest and most affecting evidence in this matchless instance of it, namely, that in the fulness of time, God, according to his eternal purpose of love and grace, sent forth his own divine and only begotten Son, in a way of special operation, into this lower world, to assume human nature into personal union with himself, or to be *made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law*, (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) *that through his merit and righteousness* we, who believe in him, *might not perish, but have everlasting life*. (John iii. 16.)

10 In this there really was, and most evidently appeared to be, unparalleled love, not to friends, or persons lovely in themselves, but to *enemies, sinners, and ungodly wretches*; (Rom. v. 6, 8, 10.) not from any consideration or foresight of previous love in us toward him to move him to it, but from his own mere undeserved and preventing love and grace, by which he was beforehand with us; (*ver. 19.*) and, in the greatness of that love, he sent his own supremely beloved and only begotten Son to bleed, suffer, and die in our nature and stead, and thereby make an effectual atone-
ment,

N O T E.

* God is often styled *holy, righteous, love*: Which may intimate, that this is the darling and reigning attribute that sheds a most amiable glory upon all his other perfections, and upon all his designs and performances with regard to his people.

ment, to the full satisfaction of divine justice, for our great and multiplied offences, which otherwise must have been charged and punished upon us to our eternal destruction.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

11 How great, ye dearly beloved of God and me, are the constraints of this love! If God loved us at so high and astonishing a rate as this, we, whom he thus loved, and redeemed by the precious blood of his Son, most certainly ought, in imitation of him, and as influenced by his superlative love, to keep up the most ardent affection one towards another, as Christian brethren, for his sake, and in obedience to his commandment. (*ver. 21.*)

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

12 God himself is an invisible spirit, *whom no man has seen, nor can see* with both bodily eyes, (1 Tim. vi. 16.) to move his affection to him; but the objects of his love, who bear his holy image, are visible, daily seen, and conversed with, that we might be induced to testify our love to him, by shewing it for his sake to them. (See *ver. 20.*) If therefore we love one another, as children of his own likeness, this is a proof of our love to him, and it hereby appears that he dwells in us by his Spirit to produce this love; and both his love to us has hereby manifested itself, and attained its end and design to a good degree in us; * and our love to him is hereby brought to its true form, and exercised with eminence, and is proved to be sincere in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

13 By this we have a comfortable evidence of a mutual inhabitation between God and us, of our dwelling by faith and love in union and communion through Jesus Christ, with him; and of his dwelling by gracious manifestations and influences in our souls, because he has freely afforded us rich communications of his Spirit to beget and animate this faith and love, and to cast a light upon his own work in us.

14 And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

14 And we, the apostles of Christ, have seen him with our bodily eyes (*chap. i. 1.*) in his human nature, preaching, and miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension to glory; and we now bear witness, upon infallible evidence, that the eternal Father has actually sent his only begotten Son, to take

NOTE.

* *His love* (*αγάπη αυτου*) may be considered either *subjectively* for the love that is in him to us, or *objectively*, for the love we have to him. (See the note on *chap. ii. 15.*) But which ever way we take it, *his love being perfected in us*, is not to be understood, as though either his love to us, or ours to him, had in this world completely attained all its ends,

and produced the whole of its effects; but both his love and ours may be said to be *perfected in us*, much after the same manner as *his strength* is said to be *made perfect*, or manifested with great advantage in our weakness; (2 Cor. xii. 9.) and as *faith* is said to be *made perfect* or demonstrated to be sincere, genuine, and eminent, by works. (James ii. 22.)

upon him our nature; and by the course of obedience and sufferings, which in that humble state he fulfilled, to be the Redeemer and Saviour of both *Jews and Gentiles*, that do, or ever shall believe in him throughout the world, (see the note on *John* iii. 16.) according to ancient prophecies, that *the desire of all nations should come*, (*Hag.* ii. 7.) and that *in him all nations of the earth should be blessed*. (*Gen.* xxii. 18.)

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

15 Whosoever therefore shall, from a principle of faith, which works by love, boldly own and declare his belief with full assent and consent, in the face of all opposition and danger, in these perilous days, that Jesus is this eminently peculiar Son of God, and the only Saviour of sinners, it is thereby manifest that God dwells in him by his Spirit, which has led him into these just and exalted sentiments of Christ, with a firm adherence to him; and that he dwells in God by faith and love, through the great Mediator.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

16 And we, who are blessed with an experience of this, have been well assured, and fully persuaded, on the foot of the gospel-revelation, and the concurring witness of the Spirit with our spirits, that the most peculiar, transcendent, free, and distinguishing love is in the heart of God toward us, and is manifested by his *sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live through him*. (*ver.* 9, 10.) By this it plainly appears, as has been observed, (*ver.* 8. see the note there) that God is all love to us, and there is no fury in him against us; and we may certainly conclude from thence, that whoever lives under the power of a hearty love to him, and to his children for his sake, is so assimilated to the God of love, as to abide in a reciprocal union and communion with him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

17 By our thus dwelling in love, it is evidently proved to be sincere, and of considerable strength; (see the note on *ver.* 12.) and it having this plain token of God's love to us, we may assuredly hope to appear with humble confidence before him, as true believers, in the awful day of judgment; because as he is all love to us, so we in resemblance of him, and in consideration of his love, are filled with a supreme love to him, and with a sincere and ardent love to the brethren for his sake, even while we live in this tempting and ensnaring world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment: he that feareth

18 This love is of such a delightful nature, that, though it be ever attended with a holy filial reverence of God, and cautious fear of offending him; yet, as we thereby *know that we have passed from death to life*, (*chap.* iii. 14.) there is no distrustful, despairing, or

feareth is not
made perfect in
love.

19 We love him,
because he first lo-
ved us.

20 If a man say,
I love God, and
hateth his bro-
ther, he is a liar:
for he that loveth
not his brother
whom he hath
seen, how can he
love God whom he
hath not seen?

or terrifying fear of God in it, as if he were our enemy: But a sincere love to him, and to fellow Christians for his sake, especially when it is exalted to its highest pitch and fervour, under an assuring sense of his love to us, banishes all diffident, slavish fear of God; because this sort of fear is a most distressing passion, utterly inconsistent with a prevailing sense of his love, and with the sweetness, pleasure, and confidence of a complacential love to him. It is a plain consequence from hence, that he who has a servile dread of God, as an enemy, is far from living under the power of that delightful love, which springs from faith, and considers him as a reconciled God and Father in Christ, and as the most amiable object, infinitely lovely in himself, and all love to us. (*ver. 16.*)

19 Our love to him is kindled by, and is the fruit and effect of his own free love to us. He was first in his love to us, which eternally delighted in all his thoughts, schemes, and purposes of glorifying himself in our recovery and salvation by his Son, and which is the original cause and pattern of all our love to him; and the manifestations of his love to us, and our sense of it, and reflections upon it, are the powerful motives of ours again to him; our hearts having before been alienated from him, and never would have been in love with him, had he not first loved us, and given us some discoveries of it to induce our love to him again.

20 This love to God is so inseparably connected with love to his children, that if any one pretends to say, I love God, and at the same time bears an uncharitable, irreconcilable, and malicious temper toward his Christian brother, he acts inconsistently with, and gives the lie to his own profession, and to all that the holy Scriptures say about sincere love to God, which includes a love to all that bear his image and belong to him: For whoever he be that has not a cordial affection to his brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, whom he has seen with his bodily eyes, in whom he may also see visible traces of the image of God, and who is an object daily presented to his senses, to raise his esteem of him, and move his compassion and kindness to him, as occasions require; how is it likely, or even possible, that he should heartily love God, who is invisible to mortal eyes, and makes no impression of himself upon the external senses, to affect the heart and engage its love to him, which can never be sincere without a conscientious respect to all his commandments! (*See chap. v. 3.*)

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also.

21 And this is one great and summary commandment, which we have received from him, as ye have heard, (*chap. iii. 23.*) and which he has given us in the moral law, and with further explications and enforcements by Jesus Christ in the gospel, (*Matth. xxii. 37,—39. and John xv. 12, 17.*) that he, who sincerely loves God, should also love his Christian brother, who bears his Father's image, and is dear to him; and should make it appear by this, that he doth indeed unfeignedly love God.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a certain test have private Christians, as well as others, in the word of God, to distinguish between those that broach errors concerning the divine person and saving offices of Christ, under pretence of their having the Spirit of God; and those that, under his guidance and influence, preach the truth as it is in Jesus, and cordially own, and bravely profess that he is the only begotten Son of God, and has really appeared in human nature as the Saviour of lost sinners among both *Jews and Gentiles*! All pretenders to the Spirit are not of God, nor are to be believed and followed; and they that are born of God, need not be stumbled at them, since there ever have been such in the world; and true believers are enabled to see through them and their delusions, and to withstand and overcome them; because God, who dwells in them by his Spirit, is infinitely greater, wiser, and stronger than the devil, who works and prevails by his antichristian emissaries, upon carnal men. And what wonder is it, that people of a worldly spirit should adhere to them, who are like themselves, and accommodate their schemes and discourses to their corrupt taste? But the servants of God speak from, and for him, according to his mind and will; and therefore are suitably regarded by those, and those only, that are well affected in their hearts toward him.—How astonishing is the free love of God toward such sinful creatures as we are, that he (as his inspired servants testify) has sent his best beloved Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live in all blessedness and glory for ever with him! This is a high demonstration indeed, that God is love; and we must be utter strangers to his amiable excellencies, if we do not love him: Not that we are or can be before hand with him in loving; for we love him, because he first loved us, and because we are brought under its influence and manifestation, to know and believe it. This melts our hearts and gains over our affections to him, and to his children for his sake. And what a sure token is this of our being born of God, and of his dwelling by his Spirit in us, and of our union and communion with him, as those whom he loves! But how vain and preposterous is it, for any to pretend that they have a true and hearty love to that God, whom they never saw, if they have enmity in their souls against those in whom his image is visible, and whom they often see and converse with! This is giving the lie to their own profession, and to the declarations of God in his word, who has commanded that he, who loves him, should love his brother also. And when love to God and one another is genuine and abounding, how sweet are its workings! It banishes all slavish tormenting fear of him, and of his wrath, which is inconsistent with an affectionate complacential love to him, and to his children as such. But having this evidence of our interest in his love, with what satisfaction may we hope to appear before him with humble boldness in the day of judgment, as those that are accepted of him through his Son.

C H A P. V.

The apostle concludes his argument for brotherly love, by shewing that it is the effect of a new birth, which produces such a love to God, as makes obedience to all his commandments pleasant, and such a faith in Christ, as overcomes this world, 1,—5. Then, to establish their faith in Christ, he refers to three witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, as concurring to prove that Jesus, the Son of God, is the true Messiah, 6,—9. Shews the satisfaction that the believer has in his own soul about him, and eternal life through him, and about God's hearing and answering the prayers, that are offered up according to his will, for ourselves and others, 10,—17. And concludes with an account of the happy condition of true believers beyond the rest of the world, and with a charge to renounce all idolatry, 18,—21.

TEXT.

Whoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to close the argument about brotherly love, which has been so much insisted upon in this epistle, ye ought seriously to consider, that whoever in his very heart believes that Jesus is the true Messiah, and has accordingly an entire dependence upon him, as the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of the church, for all salvation, is regenerated by the Spirit of God: And every one who, from this principle of faith, has a supreme love to God, in his esteem of him, desire after him, and delight in him, *who of his own will begat us with the word of truth,* (James i. 18.) cannot but likewise bear a good will to, and take pleasure in his Christian-brother, merely because he is beloved of God, and bears his image, as one that is spiritually begotten of him.

2 It is a plain token, by which we know that we love the children of God, with a genuine Christian love, merely on account of their relation and likeness to him, when it proceeds from such a prevailing love to God himself, as inclines and engages us sincerely to endeavour, by his grace, to live in all holy obedience to his commandments, relating to this and every other duty.

3 For this is the true and distinguishing characteristic of an unfeigned and governing love to God; and this is the test, proof, and evidence of its being so, and is its proper tendency and effect, that it determines us to *have an impartial respect to all his commandments:* (Pl. exix. 6.) And this sweetly constrains us to pay a conscientious obedience to them, without picking and chusing, or counting any of them (*Sargum*) a heavy burden or grievous task; but attending

to them all, as comprehended in the great law of love, with freedom and delight. (See *Mat.* xi. 29, 30.)

4 For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

4 For whosoever is born again by the regenerating operation of the Spirit of God, he himself, and (*καὶ τὸ νῦν γεννητόν*) all that new nature which is born or produced in him, gets above the terrors and allurements of the men and things of this world, and even triumphs over them; so as not to be disheartened or driven away by the one, or drawn aside by the other, from his duty toward God: And the noble conquest which we, of this character, obtain over every thing of this world, that would obstruct or interfere with our love and obedience to God, is not by any power of our own, but by the strength we derive from Christ, through faith in him, whereby we trust in him and in God through him, and have realizing and assuring views and hopes of an incomparably higher happiness in the world to come, than it is possible for us to lose in this. (*Heb.* x. 34. and xi. 1.)

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

5 Who is there of all mankind, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, that ever hath obtained such a victory over this world, and is so far dead to every thing in it, as not to be cooled in his affections toward God, nor alienated in heart or life from him, by any of its frowns or smiles? Where is the man that has attained to this, but the Christian, who in his very soul believes that Jesus is the true Messiah, and the only begotten Son of God, and depends upon him by a lively and effectual faith as such, for justification, sanctification, and complete salvation?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

6 This true and only Messiah, even Jesus the appointed Saviour, is he who came into our world with a commission from his heavenly Father to fulfil the work of redemption, which was divinely testified, not only by his coming with water at his baptism; (*Mat.* iii. 16.) but also with water and blood at his death, when the writer of this epistle particularly observed, that both water and blood came forth from his pierced side; intimating, in a symbolical way, the purification which was brought in by him from the defilement and guilt of sin, according to what was typified by legal washings with water, and with the blood of expiatory sacrifices. (See the note on *John* xix. 34, 35.) And his character was afterwards attested by the Holy Spirit, in applying the virtue of his death to the consciences of believers for producing both these effects, as well as in glorifying Christ, by shewing his things to them, and enabling his servants to work innumerable miracles in his name; and we may depend upon the witness which the Holy Spirit, in this practical and effectual manner, bore to Christ,

because he is, by way of eminence, *the Spirit of truth*. (John xiv. 17.)

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

7 For there are three divine persons, the habitation of whose glory is in heaven, that bear their united testimony to the incarnate Saviour from thence, *The first* is God the Father, who said of Christ at his baptism and transfiguration, (*Matth. iii. 17. and xvii. 5.*) *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*; and (*Rom. i. 4.*) *declared him to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead*: *The second* is the eternal uncreated Word himself, who ever was God with the Father; (see the note on *John i. 1.*) and said, *I and my Father are one*; (*John x. 30.*) and often asserted his office, as well as divine character in the plainest terms, and appealed for the truth of it to the miracles which he wrought by his own power, and particularly to his raising himself from the dead: (*John ii. 19.*) *The third* of these heavenly witnesses is the Holy Spirit, who gave abundant attestations to our blessed Lord, as the only Saviour, by his visible descent upon him at his baptism, (*Luke iii. 22.*) and by his coming from the exalted Messiah in heaven to bear witness to him, and to spread his name, kingdom, and glory in the world*. And these three heavenly witnesses, though

NOTE

* It would be to little purpose to trouble the common *English* reader with the disputes that critics, especially of latter ages, have raised about the *genuineness* of this verse. The learned may consult *Mill*: in loc. where the Doctor gives the fullest and fairest account. I have any where met with, of the pleas, that are urged from ancient copies, versions, and quotations, on both sides of the question; from the whole of which he concludes, that the arguments brought for the authority of this text seem to him to be so strong, that it ought by no means to be dropped. And several *rational evidences* to support the authenticity of it may be seen in Mr. *John Reynolds*'s continuation of Mr. *Henry*'s exposition; where he makes most of the following observations, with which I have intermixed a few others. If we drop this verse, and join the 8th to the 6th, it looks too like a tautology, and the beauty and propriety of the connection is lost, as may appear to any that attentively read the 6th and 8th verses together, leaving out the 7th; and they do not give us near so noble an introduction of the witnesses, as our present reading doth; nor make the visible opposition to some

witness or witnesses elsewhere, as is manifestly suggested in the words, *And there are three that bear witness in earth*, ver. 8. But all stands in a natural and elegant order, if we take in the 7th verse, which is very agreeable, and almost peculiar to the style and sentiments of our apostle, who, of all others, delights in these titles, *the Father and the Word*, and who is the only sacred writer that records our Lord's words, in which he speaks of *the Spirit's testifying of him*, and *glorifying him* by *receiving of his things*, and *showing them to his disciples*, and says, *I and my Father are one*. (*John x. 30. xv. 26. and xvi. 14.*) *The Trinitarians* therefore had less occasion to interpolate this verse, than the *Antitrinitarians* had to take it out of the sacred canon, if any, on either side, can be supposed to be so very wicked as to make such an attempt; and it is much more likely that some transcriber might, through the similitude of the beginning of the 7th and 8th verses, or through some obscurity in the writing of that part of his copy, carelessly slip over the 7th, than that any should be so daring as designedly to add it to the text; and it can scarce be thought

though *personally* distinct in a manner that infinitely transcends all our ideas, are *essentially* one divine being, one thing, (*ver. 1*) or one God, in distinction from, and in opposition to all nominal or pretended deities, which *by nature* are no gods. (Gal. iv. 8.)

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

8 And in concurring testimony with these three divine persons in heaven, who subsist in the unity of the Godhead, and have given their distinct attestations to the saving office of Christ, * there are three *practical* witnesses to the same upon earth. One of these lies in the miraculous gifts and saving graces of the Holy Spirit: Another is the spotless purity of Christ's human nature and life, (Heb. vii. 26.) and his holy doctrine, by means of which the souls of believers are *sanctified*, and *cleansed*, as it were, with *clean water*, (John xvii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 22. and Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) as was signified, not only by John's baptism, which pointed to Christ for this benefit; (Matth. iii. 11.) but also by our Lord's own institution of the standing ordinance of Christian-baptism in the name of the sacred Three, which is a solemn and holy dedication of the baptized to the *Son*, together with the *Father* and the *Holy Ghost*: And the third of these witnesses is the *blood of the New Testament*, which was shed for many for the remission of sins, as represented in the Lord's supper, (Matth. xxvi. 28.) and applied to *purge the consciences* of true believers from dead works to serve the living God. (Heb. ix. 14.) And these three, though they be not *one in nature* or essence, nor are to be considered under *personal* agency, as the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost* are; yet they harmoniously agree, (*us vs 11*) unto the bearing of one and the same practical testimony among themselves on earth, and

N O T E S.

that the apostle, in representing the foundation of the Christian's faith, and the various testimonies that were given to Christ, should omit the supreme testimony; and yet with a reference to the before recited witnesses should add, (*ver. 9*) *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater*, though, according to the Arian sense of the 8th verse, no immediate witness of God had been mentioned before, if we leave out the 7th verse. (See some of these, and such like thoughts, more at large in Mr. Reynold's. See also Dr. Hammond on the place.)

* The whole context shews that the witness here given to Christ relates most immediately to his character as the great

Messiah, or incarnate Son of God; and therefore he, as the *Word*, denoting his divine nature, under which he is mentioned as a witness to this character, *ver. 7*, is as proper a witness of it as either the *Father* or the *Spirit*; and I take the *Spirit* in this verse to relate, not to his personal attestation to this character of Christ, which he gave as one of the witnesses in heaven, (*ver. 7*) but to his gifts and graces, since that which is born of the Spirit is called *Spirit*. (John iii. 6.) And these witness to Christ on earth, as they appear, and evidently operate in, and by the subjects of them on earth, in confirmation of the doctrine of the gospel concerning him.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.

and with the adorable *Three* in heaven, as to Christ's being the divine, complete and only Saviour of sinners.

9 Now if, according to what is written in the law of God, we readily admit of, and depend upon the testimony of two or three credible witnesses among men, (*Deut. xvii. 6. and xix. 15. and Matth. xviii. 16.*) and they are judged sufficient to determine all controversies about human affairs in any court of judicature; we may be much more sure that the infallible testimony of God the Father, Son, and Spirit in heaven, as well as of those three other witnesses, by divine appointment, on earth, ought to be unquestionably and absolutely depended upon: For this is the testimony of that God who cannot lie, and who in these various ways has given it concerning his only begotten and eternal Son, with regard to his being the true Messiah.

10 Whosoever, upon all this divine evidence, cordially believes and trusts in the incarnate Son of God, as the only true and all-sufficient Saviour, he has, by the light and influence of the Spirit, embraced this witness of God, and has an experimental and satisfying testimony in his own soul of the suitableness, worth, and excellency of Christ; of his ability and willingness to save him; and of his being authorised and every way qualified to deliver him from the guilt and power of his sins, and from all the miseries they had entailed upon him, and to conduct him safe to heavenly glory. On the contrary, whosoever, through unbelief, rejects the testimony of God concerning Christ and salvation alone by him, he flatly contradicts the truth of what God has said about him, and so, in effect, gives the great and holy God the lie; because he does not assent and consent to, and rely upon the plain and positive testimony, (*την μαρτυριαν*) which he has given by his own witnessing, in the ways above-mentioned, to the mediatorial character of his only begotten Son.

11 And this is the sum and substance of the divine testimony, *viz.* That God the Father, according to the eternal counsel and good pleasure of his will, has, on Christ's account, given to us who believe in him, (*ver. 13.*) a right and title to, and meetness for, together with the beginnings, earnestness, and foretastes of eternal life: And all the felicity of this most excellent life is purchased by, and treasured up and secured in his Son, who, as the head of his body, the church, has all the springs and fulness of it in himself, to communicate to us in the dispensations of grace, which shall issue in all the blessings of eternal glory.

12 Hence

12 He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

12 Hence it plainly follows, that he who is vitally united to, and so has a special interest in the Son of God, as his head and redeemer, through faith in him, is already spiritually alive, both in a legal and moral sense, and has the whole of everlasting life in title and sure reversion: But he who, through unbelief, rejects the Son of God, and so, according to the gospel constitution, excludes himself from any peculiar relation to, and interest in him as a divine Saviour, continues still to be dead in trespasses and sins, and has no pleadable right or claim to the blessings of eternal life. (*John iii. 36.*)

13 My design in setting these divine testimonies to Christ in so clear and strong a light before you, who under a sense of your helpless, guilty, lost, and ruined state and condition, as sinners against God, heartily receive and depend upon his eternal Son as your only Saviour, is, that ye may be assured, for your comfort, by the witness of the Spirit with, and in your own souls, according to the word, that ye have all the blessedness and glory, included in the notion of an immortal and heavenly life, in title and reversion; and have not only the earnest of it in yourselves, but have the whole of it in Christ your head, who, as such, has taken possession of it for you; and my further view herein is, that ye may be excited still more and more stedfastly, and with all humble and joyful confidence and perseverance to adhere to, and maintain a firm and entire trust in, the merit and mediation of the only begotten Son of God.

14 And we, who really believe in him, are not only assured that he will bring us safe to glory, but we have this further satisfaction and holy boldness (*suggerimus*) in our humble addresses to the throne of grace through him, that even while we are in this world of temptation, sin, and sorrow, whatever we present our petitions to God for, with faith in Christ's name, after such a manner as is agreeable to his holy will, according to the notices he has given of it in the declarations, precepts, and promises of his word, he mercifully attends to, and favourably regards the voice of our supplications. (*John xvi. 23, 24. and Jam. i. 5, 6.*)

15 And if we are well satisfied that he graciously condescends, for Christ's sake, to hearken to our sincere, believing, humble, and fervent prayers, we may certainly conclude from thence, that whatever we, for matter and manner, thus beg of him, as may be most for his glory and our good, he, in his own time and way, doth, or will grant the requests, which

which we have put up to him in the name of his Son.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is not unto death*, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say, that he shall pray for it.

16 Now, to add a direction or two with regard to one's praying for another; if any believer in Christ perceive, that his brother in the profession of the gospel is guilty of any sin, which though in its own nature it be, as all sin is, worthy of death, and by the sentence of God's law has a just entail of everlasting destruction upon it, as its proper *wages*, in opposition to *eternal life*: (Rom. vi. 23.) Yet if it be not the *sin against the Holy Ghost*, which our blessed Lord has declared shall never be forgiven: (See the note on *Matth. xii. 31, 32.*) Or, which amounts to much the same in those who once made a profession of Christ, (see the note on *ver. 18.*) if it be not a wilful and utter apostacy from him, in which case, *nothing remains but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour such adversaries*, (Heb. x. 26, 27.) if, I say, it be not an unpardonable sin, * his Christian brother, as bound in duty and love, shall beg of God to forgive it, in the riches of his grace, through the merit of his Son; and there is ground to hope that, in answer to his prayer of faith, God will grant repentance unto life † to those that have not been guilty of the sin, which irreversibly binds one over to everlasting misery. There is such a sort of unpardonable sin, as will certainly issue in eternal death: And whenever it plainly appears from words and behaviour, that any one has gone into that sin, his case is past remedy; and I cannot encourage praying for the forgiveness of it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

17 It must be owned indeed that all iniquity, (*adikia*) as it is contrary to what is right and just toward God, or man, is a deviation (*anaistia*) from the holy law of God, and, as such, in strict justice deserves death. But as, under the *Jewish* dispensation,

NOTES.

* It has been suggested, that the *sin which is*, and the *sin which is not unto death*, relates to such diseases of the body as were inflicted in a way of judgment for sin; for the healing of which they, who had the power of working miracles, were to pray, or not, according as they should perceive, by an impulse of the Spirit, that any Christian brother had, or had not sinned such a sin. But as there does not appear to be any thing in the context that relates to *miraculous powers*, or to the cure of bodily diseases; and this is a direction to Christians in *common*, about praying, one for another,

all of which cannot be supposed, even in the apostle's days, to have had the *supernatural* gift of healing, there seems to be no foundation for that thought.

† *He shall give him life.* (*δωκεν αὐτῷ ζωὴν*) either refers to God, who, though not expressed, is the object of the prayer spoken of in the foregoing words; or else, taking it for a *Hebraism*, it may signify *life shall be given him*, much in the same manner as in *Matth. i. 23.* *They shall call his name Emmanuel* (*καλεσονται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ ΕΜΜΑΝΟΥΗΛ*) means, *His name shall be called EMMANUEL*.

tion, there were different sorts and degrees of sin, some of which were punished with death without mercy; (*Heb. x. 28.*) while others admitted of an atonement: (see *Lev. chap. iv, v, and vi.*) So, under the gospel state, there is a sort of sinning which is not aggravated, like *that* against the Holy Ghost, or *that* of utter apostacy, so as to be out of the reach of pardoning grace, though a sincere believer may, through temptation and infirmity, like *David, Peter,* and others, fall into heinous sins: And therefore it is lawful and a duty to pray, that he who has been guilty of only such sort of sins may be forgiven for Christ's sake, according to God's promise in his covenant to his people. (*Heb. viii. 12.*)

18 We know that whosoever is born of God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

18 We who have received Christ, as the only Saviour, are well assured, both from the word of God, and from the immortal nature of true grace in the heart, and from the indwelling of the Holy Ghost to keep it alive, that whoever is really regenerated by the Spirit of God, is never suffered to commit the unpardonable sin; * nor doth he with full consent and deliberation persist in the practice of any known iniquity whatsoever; but he who is spiritually begotten of God, and so born again, has an utter detestation of, and abiding contrariety of heart against such ways of sinning; in so much, that by watchfulness and prayer, and by strength derived from Christ, he takes care to keep himself from them; and Satan, that wicked spirit, has no power to influence him in such a manner, as to carry him into a determined opposition to Christ, or course of sinning that shall end in utter apostacy.

19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

19 And we are well satisfied that we are so born of God, as to be partakers of a divine nature, which is a powerful and abiding principle of all holiness; and that we are the children of God, in a peculiar relation to him, and side with him; and we know that all the rest of mankind, who are strangers to this new birth, and make up the greatest part of this world, continue voluntarily under the power of sin, and of the wicked one, (*1st TO TIMOTHY, ver. 18.*) and must be ranked

NOTE

* *Whoever is born of God sinneth not* seems here to relate peculiarly to the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, or to the sin of *total apostacy*; one or other of which, as I take it, was spoken of *ver. 16.*; and, perhaps, both may be reduced to the *blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, as in one view it was found in those, who, under all the light of the gospel revelation, never would own Christ,

but always obstinately set themselves against him; and, in another, was chargeable on those, who had been enlightened, and made a profession of faith in him. And yet, as the apostle had before spoke of true believers, as those that *cannot* sin deliberately, and with full consent and approbation, (*chap. iii. 6, 9* see the note there) that sense is also suggested in the paraphrase.

ranked under him as their head, and prince, *who works in the children of disobedience.* (Eph. ii. 2.)

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 20 And, from all the undoubted proofs before insisted on, we certainly know that Jesus, the Son of God, has assumed human nature, and actually come into this lower world, to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*; (Heb. ix. 26.) and we know by our own happy experience, that he has not only given us an external revelation in his word, but has enlightened the eyes of our minds by an internal operation of his Spirit, that we might have a saving knowledge of him, who is Truth itself: And we are vitally united to him, who, in all that he has said, is the true and faithful witness, (Rev. i. 5.) even Jesus, Christ the eternal Son of God. * This Jesus, (*ver.*) in his original nature, is the only living and true God, together with the Father and Spirit; and our faith in him, who has life in himself, and is the purchaser and giver of spiritual life to us, will certainly issue in eternal life. (*John v. 26. and xvii. 3.*)

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

21 Upon the whole then, my dear children, whom I as affectionately love, as a father doth his tender babes, let all these considerations engage you to abstain from every appearance of fellowship with pagans in their idolatrous worship of false gods, from all use of images, as representations of the deity, or as mediums of worship, and from every idol of your own hearts; and consider Christ as the true God, (*ver. 20.*) that ye may be secured against idolatry in the worship which ye pay to him. So may it be, to his and his Father's honour, and to your own comfort and salvation! In testimony of my desire and hope of its being so, I heartily say, *Amen.*

RECOLLECTIONS.

How divine, infallibly true, and most certainly, of all others, to be depended upon, are the numerous united testimonies to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Messiah, who is the eternal Son of God, the same in nature and perfections with the Father, and has come into our world for the redemption of lost sinners! As the Father, Son, and Spirit (who, though distinct persons, are one divine Being) bore witness to him from heaven; so the graces of the Spirit in the believer's heart, the purifying effects of his death in the washing of regeneration, and the remission of sins through faith in his blood, agree in their testimony on earth to him, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour: And he who, on the credit of this complicated substantial testimony, heartily believes and trusts in the Son of God, for all salvation, has an experimental and satisfying witness in his own soul, which sets to its seal that God is true, and dares venture his eternal all upon it. But he who rejects this testimony, through unbelief, gives the lie to the great God himself, the sum of whose testimony is, that he has given to believers eternal life; and this life is safe-

NOTE.

* To clear up and establish the sense of this passage, as asserting that *Christ is the true God* here intended, see my sermons on *Jesus Christ God-man*, page 59, 60.

ly treasured up for them in his Son. And O how great is their happiness! They are born of God, and bear his image as his children, and obtain a noble victory over this world by their faith; they have eternal life in and through Jesus Christ; and all their prayers of faith are heard and answered for things agreeable to the will of God. What rich provision and encouragement is here for perseverance, with increasing hope and joy, in the lively exercises of their faith! Though there be still remainders of sin in them, they cannot deliberately and wilfully go into the practice of any iniquity; but are under the government of that love to God, which engages them sincerely to love his children, because they are begotten of him after his own likeness, and to take pleasure in keeping all his commandments. Every transgression of the law, is by its sentence, and in strict justice, worthy of death; but none of them is so great, as not to admit of pardon through faith in the Son of God, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which includes total apostasy in those who once made a profession of Christ, and is utterly inconsistent with true faith in him; and it shall never be forgiven. But there is room for prayer, and hope of recovery, for any that have not yet committed this sin, which no true believers can ever fall into: For they being born of God, and united to Christ, are under efficacious influence to secure them against the devil's ever being able to draw them into that unpardonable sin. But all the unregenerate part of the world remain under the power of sin and Satan, whom they, as servants, willingly obey; and they must perish in, and for their iniquities; unless, by divine grace, they be turned from them, and brought to believe in Christ for the remission of them. May we therefore, in solemn reflections on all this, absolutely renounce every kind of idol, and worship the Lord our God, and him only; and never entertain a degrading thought of Christ, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is the true God, and the author of eternal life! To whom be glory now and for ever. Amen.

Y 2

A PRAC-

THE SECOND EPISTLE
A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION

OF THE
SECOND EPISTLE

OF THE
APOSTLE JOHN,

IN THE FORM OF A
PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THE matter and style, the spirit of love, and many expressions in *this* and the *third* epistle (which are thought to have been wrote soon after the *first*) being not only like, but the very same, with those that appear in the *first* epistle of the apostle *John*, *these*, as well as that, have been generally, and with good reason, received as canonical pieces of his writings. (See the preface to the first epistle.)

This *second* epistle, as many judicious expositors think, was wrote to some noted person of quality and eminent Christian-matron, whose proper name was either *Electa*, (*ελεκτη*) which we render *elect*, or *Cyria*, (*κυρια*) which is rendered *lady*, and to her religious children, as the *third* was personally to *Gaius*; while others suppose, that by the *elect lady* is meant, in a *figurative* sense, some New Testament church, as a collective body, most probably at *Jerusalem*, and by her *children*, the particular members of that church; and that by the *elect sister* (ver. 13.) is meant the church, where the apostle resided when he wrote this epistle. But, whatever dubious conjectures may lie on one or the other side of the question, it is difficult, and of very little importance, for us to determine upon it, though I rather take it to be meant of some *particular person* and her children, whether her name were *Cyria* or *Electa*, or not; because the apostle, speaking in the singular number, says, (ver. 4. 5.) *I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in the truth. And I beseech thee, Lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to thee*, which does not seem to be very properly understood of a church; and speaking of the *elect sister's* children greeting her, (ver. 13.) he expresses it in the singular number, saying, *greet thee*. Accordingly the paraphrase keeps up the air of a *personal* address to the *elect lady* and her children, which as it

like

like the rest of the holy scriptures, was written for our learning, may be considered with an application to any church or body of Christians, and particular persons among them, so far as its subject, matter, and terms agree to them, as the third epistle to *Gaius* may, and as what God said personally to *Joshua* is applied in common to all true believers, *Heb. xiii. 5.* (See the note there.)

In this short letter the apostle salutes the elect lady and her children, 1,—3. Expresses his joy in, and further excites their faith and love, 4,—6. Cautions them to be upon their guard against deceivers, whom he describes, 7,—9. Directs their conduct toward them, 10, 11. And concludes with excusing the shortness of his writing, by a promise, God willing, to make them a visit, and discourse more largely about things, some of which he had touched upon; and with salutations from the children of her elect sister, 12, 13.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

THE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

JOHN, who by a far advanced age in nature and Christianity, as well as by his apostolic office, and that of long standing, is the only surviving apostle, and so emphatically the elder of the church of Christ, sends this letter to the noble matron, who is well known to be, not only a person of high birth and figure in the world; but, which is most of all to her honour, an excellent and eminently choice Christian; (see the note on *Rom. ii. 1.*) which carries an evident token of God's having from the beginning chosen her to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; (2 *Thess. ii. 13.*) and together with her, the writer of this epistle includes her amiable children, who are partakers of the same faith with herself; all of whom, mother and children, I sincerely and affectionately love in Christ, who is the Truth, (*John xiv. 6.*) and for the sake of their having embraced him and the truth of the gospel: And not only I myself, but all those likewise that have heard of them, and especially that have the honour of their acquaintance, and are themselves enlightened with a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and of his true doctrine, (*ver. 9.*) bear a high esteem of them.

For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever:

2 This our affection is of a spiritual nature merely, or chiefly at least, on account of the Lord Jesus who is the truth, and of their harmonious agreement with us in receiving the word of truth, with which God of his own will has begotten us; (*1 *Jam. i. 18.**) and which, being an incorruptible seed, abides as a true and living principle of faith and holiness in us, and will remain, as such, in our souls all our days upon earth, and then flourish up into eternal life in heaven.

3 Grace be with you, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

3 In the fulness of my heart, and with humble confidence that my desire shall be answered, I earnestly beg for you, (*υμων*) mother and children, that all the riches of free love and favour, all tender compassion and pardoning mercy, and all manner of peace in your own souls, with God and one another, and with the whole household of faith, together with all prosperity of every kind, especially in your spiritual concerns, may abound towards, and abide with you all, (*υμιν*) from God the Father, who in the economy of salvation is to be considered, as the original fountain of all blessings; and from the anointed Lord and Saviour, who in his *divine nature* is the eternal Son of the eternal Father, with the most eminent propriety, and with the highest delight, as he is *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, and is the dearest Son of his love*; (Heb. ii. 3. and Col. i. 13.) and who in his *office capacity* is the only mediator, purchaser, and dispenser of all the blessings that come from the Father through him. All this I earnestly wish and hope in the sincerity and affection of my heart for you, * that ye may be established in truth and love, and persevere in the profession of them according to the gospel.

4 I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

4 In testimony of the sincerity of my love and desire for you, I can assure your ladyship that my soul was warmed with exceeding joy, (*οτι*) because, upon good evidence, I was well satisfied that, of the children which God has graciously given you, there are some, at least, who have not only received Christ and the truth of the gospel, in the notions of their heads, but have received them with faith and love, to influence their hearts and lives; † inasmuch, that wheresoever they go, their conversation is answerable thereunto, in obedience to the holy commandment, which we, the apostles of Christ, have received from God the Father with a commission to declare it.

5 And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which

5 And now, as the *end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned*, (1 Tim. i. 5.) one great reason of my writing is to entreat you, dear lady, to cultivate a holy disposition conformable to the nature and design

NOTES.

* In truth and love may relate either to Christ's being *the Son of the Father*; or to the apostle's wishing that *grace, mercy, and peace might be with them*; or to the end for which he desired this on their behalf, as represented in the paraphrase.

† It is probable that, on one occasion

or other, some of her sons had travelled abroad, as the word (*περιελαβον*) may signify; and that the apostle had met with them, and seen their excellent spirit and deportment to be as became the gospel of Christ; and therefore spake of them as persons whom he had found walking in the truth.

which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ come in the flesh. This is a receiver and an antichrist.

Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, corrupted by them; that so neither ye yourselves, nor

design of the great law of love; (*Matth. xix. 19.*) not that I mean to write and recommend to you any new commandment, as though I would impose any thing that you are not already acquainted with and obliged to obey; but what I speak of is only, for substance, that summary comprehensive commandment of the second table of the moral law, which was enjoined at the beginning of the *Mosaic* dispensation, and which our blessed Lord repeated and further explained, inculcated, and enforced by evangelical motives, at the beginning of his ministry, namely, that from a principle of love to God, we, as his disciples, should bear a hearty affection one towards another, in imitation of his love to us. (See the note on *John xiii. 34.*)

6 And this is the test, proof, and evidence of a truly Christian love, and is its genuine tendency and effect, that it engages us to have a conscientious, cheerful, and universal respect to all God's commandments. (*1 John v. 3.*) But the law of love, as springing from faith in Christ, (*1 John iii. 22, 23.*) and influential to all holy obedience, is the commandment, which I have principally in my eye, that, according to what ye have heard of it in the preaching of the word, ever since ye were first acquainted with Christianity, ye should carefully continue to put it into practice, suitable to the design of the gospel.

7 For many false teachers are gone abroad in the world, on purpose to seduce Christians from the way of evangelical faith, love, and obedience, and to sap the foundation of them all by their pernicious errors, who are so far from believing and acknowledging, that they flatly deny our Jesus to be the only true Messiah, who has actually appeared in human nature to fulfil the work of redemption; (see the note on *1 John iv. 2.*) or deny his having had a real body of flesh, but affirm that he lived and died in appearance only. Whoever espouses and broaches such heretical notions, he is one of those deluders of the people, and direct opposers of the person, doctrine, and glory of Christ, and of the whole of his saving office, which he foretold would arise; (*Matth. xxiv. 11.*) and of which I have given warning. (*1 John ii. 18.*)

8 Beware therefore of them; look about you; stand, mother and children, upon your guard; and take heed that your own faith and practice be not

NOTE

The *Alexandrian*, *Stephanus's*, and other copies of good repute, read ye, instead of *we lose*, *we have wrought*, and *we receive*. (Vide *Mill*, in loc.) The

paraphrase therefore is made with an accommodation to both senses, in a just consistency one with the other. But I rather prefer the common reading as most agreeable

wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.

agreeable to a like passage of this apostle in 1 John ii. 28.

* To bid one God speed (*χαίρειν*) was a friendly salutation among the ancients; and the forbidding this to be used to such as propagate fundamental errors, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, is generally thought to allude to the Jews forbidding to have any familiar correspondence with excommunicated persons, who were to be treated like *Heathen-men and Publicans*, as our Lord also directed the proceedings of his church (*Mattb. xviii. 17.*) against obstinate offenders, with whom the apostle *Paul* says they were

nor we, the servants of Christ, may lose the good fruit of our ministry, which was instrumental in gaining you over to Christ, not only in profession, but, as we trust, in sincerity and truth: But, after all the attempts of deceivers to pervert you, *hold that fast which ye have, that no man take your crown*, (*Rev. iii. 11.*) and that we, together with you, may reap the whole of the blessed reward, answerable to the utmost of our hopes and desires, which God, for Christ's sake, has graciously promised to his faithful servants *that turn many to righteousness*, (*Dan. xii. 3.*) and to all *them that love him*. (*Jam. i. 12.*)

9 Let men's pretences be what they will, every one who allowedly transgresses the law of God, and particularly *that of love*; (*ver. 5. 6.*) and does not continue to hold and profess the pure doctrine of Christ, as the true Messiah, (*1 John ii. 22,—24.*) he has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him; nor has he any claim to an interest in God, or in his favour and love. He, on the contrary, who continues to believe and profess, and to practise according to the doctrine of Christ, and concerning him, is a true believer, in spiritual and holy union and communion both with the eternal Father and his eternal Son: (*1 John i. 3. and ii. 24.*) The Spirit of the Father and Son dwells in him; (*1 John iv. 2.*) and he has a sure interest in their favour and love.

10 If there be any one that comes to you with pretences of preaching the gospel, and doth not bring the forementioned doctrine of Christ in his ministrations, but advances principles subversive of it, give him no hospitable entertainment, more than the common laws of humanity require, as though he were welcome to your house; no, nor so much as admit him into your doors to vent his errors in your family, and endanger the corrupting of them from the simplicity that is in Christ; * nor have any such familiar conversation

N O T E S.

not to eat. (*1 Cor. v. 9, 11.* see the note there.) And the story is well known which *Eusebius* relates from *Irenaeus*, in his ecclesiastical history, (lib. 4. cap. 14.) where he says, "The apostle John going into the bath at *Ephesus* to wash himself, and seeing *Cerinthus* there, a notorious heretic, leaped out of the bath unawalled, saying, *that he feared lest the bath should fall down*, when *Cerinthus*, the enemy of truth, was in it: And *Polycarp*, one of *John's* disciples, meeting at a certain time with *Marcion*, who said to him, *acknowledge me*; he answered, *I know thee*"

conversation with him, as looks like wishing that God would prosper him in his pernicious designs.

11 For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

11 For whoever shews him any countenance, and speaks him fair, like one that wishes him success in the abominable principles and practices, which he would propagate, is accessory to, and by just construction a partner with him in his wicked works, and contracts the guilt of helping him forward therein, and of encouraging others to fall in with him.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink; but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

12 There are many things of this and the like nature, that I could write to you, which I do not think proper to do at present, by further setting pen and ink to paper; but I live in hope, that, by the will of God, I may, ere long, have an opportunity of making you a visit, and personally conversing with you all, that we may have mutual pleasure, and an entire satisfaction, in freely talking them over by word of mouth.

13 The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

13 The pious children of your sister after the flesh, and in a spiritual sense your choice, excellent, and I trust your sister chosen in Christ, send their most dutiful and affectionate respects to you. * May there be many such ornaments to the Christian religion among ladies of distinction and their offspring! *Amen.*

RECollections.

How rare, but O how lovely is it for persons of quality and their children to embrace the pure uncorrupted doctrine of Christ with faith and love, and to walk answerable to it. All faithful ministers and friends to the truth of the gospel greatly rejoice wherever they find it, and most sincerely wish them the best of blessings from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ, his dear and only begotten Son.—Christian religion makes no abatement of civil respect to persons of high rank and near a kin; but gives a spiritual turn to the most dutiful and affectionate salutations of them.—How important is it for professing believers to stand fast and persevere in the faith of Christ, as the incarnate and atoning Saviour, and in the most cordial love to him, and to one another for his sake, according to the commandment of God, inclusive of a conscientious respect to every other precept! These, and these only, have the benefit of a special relation to, and interest in God the Father, and his eternal Son. But, in order to their evident and comfortable continuance herein, how highly doth it concern them, that they be not deceived by false teachers, and infected with antichristian errors, lest they themselves, as well as those that were instrumental to their conversion, should be disappointed of the ample satisfaction they hoped for in the happy effects of the gospel upon them! And how cautious should they be of giving any encouragement or countenance to seducers, that would subvert the fundamental articles of faith, relating to the person and offices, doctrine and glory of Christ! They who bid them God speed are accessory

NOTES.

"to be the first-born of Satan." So greatly were the apostles and their disciples afraid of countenancing and freely conversing with any that had grossly adulterated the truth, even as Paul says, a

* Probably the sister herself was absent, if not dead, when the apostle wrote this epistle, and therefore he sent only the salutation of her children, at their request.

heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject. (Tit. iii. 10.)

accessory to all the mischief that is done by their destructive error. — But these things may be better talked over in a free conversation with private Christians, more at large, than can well be wrote in a short letter. May all professors of Christ be preserved, by divine grace, from every delusion! *Amen.*

A PRAC

A PRACTICAL
E X P O S I T I O N
OF THE
THIRD EPISTLE
OF THE
A P O S T L E J O H N,
IN THE FORM OF A
P A R A P H R A S E.

THE PREFACE TO THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

IT is needless to add much to what has been said in the prefaces to the two former epistles of *John*. *Gaius*, to whom this was wrote, is most generally thought to have been that *Gaius*, whom the apostle *Paul* called *his host*. (Rom. xvi. 23. see the note there.) But as various persons bore that name, it is hard to determine who this *Gaius* was.

The apostle congratulates Gaius upon his eminent piety and hospitality, 1,—8. Cautions him against siding with Diotrephes, who was a minister of a haughty and turbulent spirit, 9,—11. But recommends Demetrius as a man of an excellent character, 12. Excuses the brevity of this letter by the hope he had of soon seeing Gaius, and concludes with salutations, 13, 14.

TEXT.

THE elder unto the well-beloved *Gaius*, whom I love in the truth.

PARAPHRASE.

JOHⁿ the apostle who, on account of his great age and high office, may with double propriety, and peculiar emphasis, be styled *the elder*, sends these few lines to the dearly beloved *Gaius*, for whom I, who call myself *the elder*, have the most sincere affection, on account of his attachment to the truth of the gospel.

^a Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayst prosper

2 So eminent are your light, grace, and holiness, and so evident the fruits of them, my dear Christian friend, that when I consider the weakness and infirmity

prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

mity of your bodily state of health, * and the many difficulties that obstruct your being so vigorously and extensively useful, as your pious and generous temper disposes and qualifies you for, I have nothing so much at heart relating to you, as to desire and beg of God, that all your affairs of life, and animal nature, may hold equal pace with your judicious and thriving soul in all its spiritual concerns.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

3 For I exceedingly rejoiced, when those Christian brethren that came from you, gave an account of the sincerity of your faith, by means of which the word of truth, the gospel of salvation has taken possession of your heart, as evidently appears by your steadily persevering to walk in Christ, and in the way of truth and holiness, through the whole course of your life and conversation, in these perilous days of persecution, defection, and error.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.

4 Nothing can afford me a greater satisfaction and delight, than to hear, as I do of you and others, (2 *Epist.* ver. 4.) that those converts, whom I think of with as much tenderness, care, and affection, † as if they were my own children according to the flesh, hold fast the truth of the gospel in its purity, and live in all holy conversation and godliness answerable to it.

5 Beloved, thou dost faithfully whatsoever thou dost to the brethren, and to strangers.

5 It is an unspeakable pleasure to me, my dear *Gaius*, when I hear and reflect upon it, that you act with an integrity becoming your lovely character, and with faithfulness to your obligations, talents, and conscience, as a Christian, in all compassionate and generous assistances to the ministering servants of Christ, and private brethren of your church and acquaintance, that need your liberality; and to religious strangers that are driven from place to place by the violence of persecutions, or voluntarily go abroad to preach the gospel, and are well recommended to you.

6 Some

NOTES.

* It is probable that *Gaius* was of a sickly constitution, and met with losses, or entanglements in secular affairs, through persecutions for the sake of Christ, which were a restraint upon some more eminent degrees of public service, that he might otherwise have gone into. This therefore was the best wish that the apostle could make for *Gaius*. But to wish that prosperity of soul may be the measure of prosperity in health and worldly affairs to the greatest part of mankind, would be to imprecate a curse, instead of desiring a blessing upon them.

† *Gaius* (if it was he whom the apos-

tle *Paul* called *his host* while he was at *Corinth*, Rom. xvi. 23.) seems to have been converted by that apostle who baptized him, (1 *Cor.* i. 14.) and spoke of himself, as the spiritual father that had begotten the *Corinthians* by the gospel, and espoused them to Christ: (1 *Cor.* iv. 15. and 2 *Cor.* xi. 2.) And therefore, when our apostle speaks of *Gaius* and other believers as *his children*, it may be considered as the tender style of paternal love and affection toward them, whoever were the instruments of their conversion; and his using this appellation, when writing under the character of *the elder*, has its peculiar beauty.

6 Which have born witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well.

7 Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Dio-

6 Some of these who have been refreshed by your bounty, have publicly bore an honourable testimony to your benevolence and hospitality in the presence of the church, where I now reside; (see the preface to the first epistle) and as they are about to return to you, and then proceed to some other places for further spreading the gospel among the *Gentiles*; if, according to your wonted kindness, you will be so good as to do what in you lies to give them all needful assistances for their journey, in a manner suitable to your own Christian-temper, and to their relation to, and employment for God, you will act (*καλως*) a worthy part toward them, in imitation of his goodness.

7 For in their love and obedience to our blessed Lord, and zeal for his glory, they, though of the *Jewish* nation, cheerfully went abroad with a commission to preach the gospel to the *Gentiles*; and, that they might do it without prejudicing the *Gentiles* against them, as though they were mercenary in their designs, they waved their right of claiming a maintenance from them; (see the paraphrase and notes on 1 Cor. ix. 4,—14.) and gave their labours freely, casting themselves on the providence of God for a subsistence, without asking or receiving any thing towards it from the *Gentile*-converts.

8 It therefore certainly is our duty, who wish well to the cause of Christ and to immortal souls, to take such generous, and disinterested, and needy ministers into our affectionate care and kind regards; and to be helpful to them according to our ability, that we may have the pleasure and the honour of bearing a part with them in the success of their ministrations, by contributing to their maintenance; and so may work together with them in propagating the truth of the gospel among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*.

9 I would have wrote a letter * to recommend these worthy brethren to the church, of which you, my dear

NOTE.

* Several critics have observed, that according to the indefinite latitude of the *αοριστ* (*επαφια*) I wrote, may be rendered I would have wrote, or was about to have wrote to the church, referring, not to any former letter, but to what the apostle would have wrote, had it not been for the malignant lordly temper and influence of *Diotrephes* among them, probably the church at *Corinth*, of which *Gaius* appears to have been a member, if it is the same that is spoken of *Rom.* xvi. 23. (See the note there.) And then, what the apostle adds about *Diotrephes*, gives a very good and obvious reason

why he wrote to *Gaius* about receiving the brethren, rather than to the church or to *Diotrephes*, who seems to have been a furious judaizing Christian, and an imperious over-bearing and leading man, if not pastor of the church, that had assumed to himself such an exorbitant power over it, as would have enabled him, either to suppress the letter, or to defeat its design, by forbidding the church to comply with it, and casting them out that would, nevertheless, shew kindness to the travelling preachers to the *Gentiles* whom it recommended.

Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

dear *Gaius*, are a member, to encourage and assist them in their important service: But *Diotrephes*, as I am well informed, behaves at such an imperious and haughty rate, and is so very ambitious of bearing an absolute sway, and of carrying every thing among them in an arbitrary manner, just according to his own mind and humour, that whatever I say, even by apostolic authority, stands for nothing with him, but is treated with disdain, as far as it thwarts his pride, prejudices, and selfish designs. I therefore chose rather to write to you about this affair, than to them, or him, who so tyrannically lords it over them, and so contemptuously rejects both me and the brethren, that are for propagating the pure gospel of Christ among the *Gentiles*. (ver. 5,—8.)

10 Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

10 This is so insufferably domineering and insolent, and so injurious to the apostolic character, to the truth itself, and to the common rights and privileges of the church, that, for this reason, whenever I may have an opportunity of making them a visit, I will severely animadvert upon, and publicly expose and reprove him before the whole church for the evil of his doings, who gives himself a scandalous liberty to talk saucily and impertinently, with wicked and malicious reproaches of me and the brethren recommended by me, as though we were beneath notice and regard: And, not being satisfied with this, he not only himself refuses to shew any kindness to the brethren that have exposed themselves to wants and hardships in preaching the gospel to the *Gentiles*; but, by his arbitrary way of proceeding, hinders those from countenancing and assisting them that are well inclined to it; and is so violent against them, that if they either will not, or in conscience dare not comply with his unreasonable impositions, he, by his own usurped authority, excommunicates them from any further relation to, or communion with the church.

11 Beloved follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil, hath not seen God.

11 My dearly beloved *Gaius*, take heed of being intimidated by his haughty and tyrannical management, much more of being influenced to an imitation of his wicked temper and ways, or of any sinful practice whatever; but copy after * every thing that is excellent in a good man, wheresoever you see it. He who is a *doer of good*, (*ο αγαθος*) and that particularly in a way of benevolence to the servants of Christ

N O T E.

* *Diotrephes* having been spoken of as a wicked man just before, ver. 9, 10. and *Demetrius* being recommended as a good man immediately after, ver. 12. it is natural to suppose that the apostle had his

eye upon both these persons, as well as their ways, in his exhortation to follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.

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Christ for his sake, is born of God, bears his likeness, lives under the influence of his Spirit, is approved of him, and has communion with him: But whosoever he be that is *a worker of iniquity* (*εργαζομενος*) like *Diotrephes*; and that particularly in haughty insolence, and in cruel and malicious opposition to the faithful servants of Christ, is a stranger to the true knowledge of God and communion with him, who is love. (1 John iii. 6, 10. and iv. 3.)

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itself: yea, and we also bear record and ye know that our record is true.

12 There is one among you, a man of a more excellent spirit than *Diotrephes*; such an one I would recommend to your imitation; and that is the noted *Demetrius*, * who is a Christian of a most amiable character, particularly for beneficence and charity, among all his acquaintance, whether professors or not; as appears from many instances of his goodness, and as must be acknowledged, to the credit of the gospel, by every one that would speak the truth concerning him: Yea, and we, the apostles and ministers of Christ, cannot but bear an honourable testimony to him, from what we have seen or heard of him, as an exemplary and public-spirited Christian; and those of you who are sincere members of the church, (*οιδωσι*) well know that our testimony, (*μαρτυρια*) which is never given upon slight evidence, may be fully depended upon as faithful and true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

13 Many other things were in my mind to write to you, relating to these and such like points; but, upon further thoughts, I judge it may be more prudent not to commit them by pen and ink to paper in this epistle to you.

14 But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace be to thee. Our friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

14 But I hope, by the will of God, ere long, to make you a visit; (*ver. 10.*) and then we shall have an opportunity for personal conversation together by word of mouth, in which we may freely talk over these things at large. In the mean while, I heartily wish and pray, that all prosperity of every kind, relating to soul and body, may attend you. Our Christian friends in my neighbourhood send their most affectionate respects to you. Be pleased to make *mine* acceptable to all the orderly members of the church, and cordial lovers of Christ and truth, and friends to me and his ministering servants, in your parts, as though I particularly mentioned them by name.

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N O T E.

* What *Demetrius* this was, or whether he were a minister, or private member, or officer of the church, is unknown to us; though it was well known, and he was honourably spoken of, in those days: And, by the apostle's character

of him, he appears to have been an exemplary Christian, particularly for hospitality; and on that, as well as on other accounts, a pattern of good works worthy of imitation.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How desirable, but, alas! How few are the instances of such prosperity of soul in spiritual concerns, as one would wish to be the measure of a proportional state of bodily health and success in temporal affairs! Such Christians as abound in faith and charity toward their pious acquaintance and strangers, and give substantial proofs of it in their lives, are exceeding lovely and greatly beloved, rejoiced in, caressed, and honourably spoken of as worthy of imitation, by all true friends to the gospel of Christ, and especially by his ministering servants. But how should proud, insolent imposers upon churches, and malicious revilers of the uncorrupted gospel and its faithful preachers, be detested, exposed, and censured, as open enemies to it and them, and as injurious and domineering lords over God's heritage, who will neither do good themselves, nor suffer others to do it that would! They are strangers to the true knowledge of God: But all who, from principles of faith and love, seek and do the things that please him, are his children, and ought for his sake, to assist ministering servants in their Lord's work, that they may bear a part with them in propagating evangelical truth and the good of precious souls. To write such things as these to Christian friends, as occasions offer, is very useful: But how much more delightful and advantageous is it to converse freely together about them! May all religious affection be ever preserved among true believers, and mutual sincere wishes of every kind of happiness, both temporal and spiritual, be cultivated between them, with cordial friendship one towards another! *Amen.*

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EXPOSITION
OF THE
GENERAL EPISTLE
OF THE
APOSTLE JUDE,
IN THE FORM OF A
PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

THE apostle *Jude*, the author of this epistle, styles himself the brother of *James*, (ver. 1.) and was called the son of *Alpheus* and *Mary*, and own brother to *James* the less, (*Luke* vi. 16. and *Mark* xv. 40.) to distinguish him from *Judas Iscariot*, who infamously betrayed his Lord; accordingly our apostle is called *Judas*, not *Iscariot*. (*John* xiv. 22.)

His principal design in writing this epistle was to caution and fortify the *Jewish* converts, perhaps, as Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, those especially of *Judea*, against being drawn into apostacy by means of the false teachers that had arose, and were very busy among them, to subvert the foundation of Christianity. And as the argument of *this* is much the same with, especially the *second chapter* of the second epistle of *Peter*, it is generally thought to have been wrote about the same time, three or four years before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; and great assistance may be gathered for understanding one of them by comparing it with the other.

The apostle salutes the Christians to whom he wrote, and exhorts them to stand fast in the faith against those Jewish zealots that would undermine it, 1,—4. Shews the danger of being infected by them, and the dreadful punishment which shall be inflicted on them and their followers, as exemplified in the unbelieving Israelites, in the fallen angels, and in Sodom and Gomorrah, 5,—7. Gives a hideous description of these seducers and their deplorable end, 8,—16. Cautions believers against being surprised at such deceivers arising among them, as being forewarned, that they might be forearmed against them, and maintain their own steadfastness by faith and prayer, and a prudent care one of another, 17,—23. And concludes with a lively encouraging doxology, 24, 25.

TEXT.

JUDE the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called :

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.

PARAPHRASE.

JUDAS, not *Iscariot*, but a faithful servant of Jesus Christ, sent forth by his immediate commission to preach the gospel, even that *Judas*, who, by natural birth, was brother to *James* the less, sends greeting to all believers of the circumcision, who may be considered, in the judgment of charity, as those that were set apart by God the Father, for himself in his eternal purposes of love and grace, as his elect * ; and in consequence thereof, have been secured in Jesus Christ, their covenant-head, and preserved by his all-governing providence from being cut off by death in their unconverted state ; and, in due time, were effectually called to the knowledge of him, and to a participation of all the privileges and blessings of the gospel here, and of his glorious kingdom hereafter. (1 *Thess.* ii. 12.)

2 May the tenderest compassion of the Father of mercies toward the miserable and unworthy, and peace with him and one another, and in your own consciences,

NOTE.

* As sanctified, and preserved are mentioned before called, they seem to relate, not so immediately to internal holiness, and preservation in the faith, which are after calling, as to separation to God, as the word sanctified signifies ; (see the notes on *John* x. 36. and *xvii* 17.) and to a federal and providential preservation in Christ before, and in order to these persons being called. Or if, with *Besa*, *Pareus*, and *Dr. Whitby*, we admit of a transposition of the sentence, then the order and construction will stand thus, (οἱς χάρις ἐν Θεῷ καὶ πνεῦμα ἁγίου καὶ ἐλεος Χριστοῦ τετηνευμένοις) To the called that have been sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in, or by Jesus Christ. And this still points our

thoughts the same way, as it speaks of their having been sanctified, and preserved, antecedent to their being called: And so sanctified by God the Father here answers to elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, and not to the sanctification of the Spirit in 1 *Pet.* i. 2. And the *Alexandrian*, *Stephanus's*, and some other copies, and the *Syriac*, *Ethiopic*, and other ancient versions, (*Vid. Mill. in loc.*) instead of sanctified read beloved (ἐγαπημένοις) by God the Father. But, which ever way we take it, the sanctification and preservation of the called are ascribed, not to themselves, but to the gracious acts of God the Father, and of Jesus Christ.

ces, together with the best of all prosperity of every kind; and all the excellent fruits of his special and distinguishing love, with the richest manifestations of it, increase abundantly, in their utmost fulness, towards all and every one of you, unto the begetting of the most fervent love to him and one another.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

3 My dearly beloved in the Lord, when I was studiously thoughtful about, and earnestly applied to the work of sending an epistle to you, concerning that spiritual and eternal salvation, which is common to you and me, and all true believers, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, and is proposed, and recommended in the gospel, to the acceptance of all sorts of sinners, to whom it is preached with this assurance, that *whoever comes to Christ, he will in no wise cast him out.* (John vi. 37.) This is a point of such vast importance, and so vehemently struck at in this day of sad defection, and of intriguing, as well as violent methods to overthrow it, that I thought it necessary, under divine suggestion, to write to you about it, and stir you up by every consideration relating to your own safety and comfort, and to the glory of Christ and of God in him, to exert yourselves, in an humble dependence on divine grace, with the utmost vigour, even, as it were, to an agony of labour, strife, and concern, (*συνάγων ἐν κόπῃ*) in maintaining, defending, and practising the pure and uncorrupted doctrine of faith in its full extent, with respect to the person, offices, righteousness, grace, and government of the Lord Christ, which was once for all perfected, and was delivered by him to his holy apostles, and by them to the church, consisting of believers that are holy in heart and life; and which was committed as a trust and treasure to them, that they might keep it faithfully, and transmit it to posterity, and not suffer it to be altered, or wrested out of their hands, by any means whatsoever. I say there is great need that I should write to you about this.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this con-

4 For there are certain impious and heretical men, who have clandestinely introduced themselves, by craft and flattery, among you, unawares indeed to you, but not to God; they being men, who were written of in ancient prophecies,* according to the still more

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* *Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation* manifestly relates, not to their having been before ordained to their sin, but to their being awfully judged and condemned for it. In this view it appears to me to be of little moment, whether before of old ordained refers to what was anciently written in

prophecies, if any such can be found, besides that of *Enoch*, which is not written in the Old Testament; nor, as far as I know, written at all; or to what was, as it were, written in the eternal counsels of God, in which he determined to punish them, not as creatures simply considered, but as *sinners*: For whatever

condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

ancient records of the divine mind, as a set of ungodly men, that shall be brought to the awful judgment and righteous punishment, due to them for their iniquities; who, under pretences of having embraced Christianity, pervert the doctrine of the grace of God unto the indulging of wanton and lascivious practices; and who, either to countenance themselves therein,* or to throw slander upon the principles and profession of sincere believers, put a corrupt and reproachful construction upon this gospel of free grace, as though it were calculated to encourage dissolute manners; and, by their wicked courses, they practically deny the wisdom, holiness, and authority of God in his moral precepts delivered under the Old Testament, even of that God, who, to the exclusion of all that are not by nature God, is the only living and true God: (see the notes on *John* xvii. 3: and *2 Pet.* ii. 1.) And at the same time they reject the true gospel-doctrine concerning the divine person and offices of our Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophet, priest, and king of the church; whose gospel, as a prophet, is *the doctrine according to godliness*; (*1 Tim.* vi. 3.) *who gave himself for us, as a priest, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*; (*Tit.* ii. 14.) and *the scripture of whose kingdom, as a king, is a sceptre of righteousness*. (*Heb.* i. 8.)

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, tho' ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

5 To deter you therefore from giving heed to these seducers, I would remind you, though ye, as conversant with the Old Testament, have already known, and been fully assured, that the Jehovah of *Israel*, having, with an outstretched arm, delivered his professing people out of their extreme bondage and oppressions in the land of *Egypt*, did nevertheless afterward cut off multitudes of them in the wilderness, by terrible judgments, for their disobedience and unbelief. (*1 Cor.* x. 5,—10.) And they who, being corrupted by these deceivers, fall into like sins, especially

NOTES.

ver has been *before written* in divine predictions concerning them, it was only a transcript of what God had *before determined* to inflict upon them, according to the due desert of their iniquities, which he foresaw they, through the perverseness of their own hearts, would voluntarily and maliciously involve themselves in. And I cannot conceive, why there should be any thing more harsh in the idea of God's having *before appointed*, than of his having *foretold* the righteous procedure, whereby he will take vengeance upon them for their heinous

provocations; and therefore *both* are suggested in the paraphrase.

* *Turned the grace of God into lasciviousness* may be understood, either of these false teachers taking liberty from the doctrines of grace, to indulge their sensual inclinations; or of their maliciously stigmatizing the gospel-doctrine, concerning it, as though in its own nature and design, it led to all impurity. But I am most inclined to the last of these senses; because they professedly opposed, instead of owning the true doctrine of the grace of God.

especially under the clearer light of the gospel, must expect to be still more severely punished after their example. (1 Cor. x. 11.)

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.

6 And as ye cannot but know, so ye ought seriously to consider, and reflect upon, the tremendous condition of those once happy and holy angels, (a superior order of beings to man) who did not maintain their integrity in that original state of honour and dignity (*αγγέλων*) in which God created them, but relinquished, and, by the righteous judgment of God, (2 Pet. ii. 4.) were cast down from the mansions of bliss and glory, which he had given them to be their own proper abode for ever, in case of their continuing in sinless obedience to him. These, on account of their revolt from God, and rebellion against him, through pride, envy, and affectation of higher power and dominion, than he had assigned to them, he has put into safe custody, like condemned prisoners that are loaded with fetters; and has held them fast by his holy purpose, power, and providence, as with strong and perpetual chains of the horrible darkness of sin and misery, and dismal despair, against the final judgment of the great day, when their torment will be completed, and when all apostates, and impenitent, unbelieving sinners shall depart from the blissful presence of Christ, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. (Matth. xxv. 41.)

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

7 Utter destruction shall certainly and suddenly come from the Lord upon all such; even as it did upon the infamously wicked people of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and of the neighbouring cities of *Adma* and *Zebiom*, (Gen. xix. 24, 25. and Dent. xxix. 23.) in storms of fire and brimstone, rained down from heaven upon them for the flagitious crimes which they greedily committed, by going into all manner of uncleanness, and particularly the unnatural monstrous sin of men with men. The perpetual desolation of that wicked people, and of their cities, the evident marks of which remain to this day, is exhibited in the sacred history, and in providence, to open view, as an example of God's tremendous vengeance, which carries a lively emblem of the everlasting destruction of all the wicked and ungodly in hell-fire.

8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despite dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

8 In like manner also, these profligate creatures, who vainly delude themselves and others with their own imaginations, which are no better than foolish and impure dreams, indulge gratifications of fleshly lusts that war against the soul; and defile their own bodies by their lewd practices: Yea more than that, they, like lawless persons, treat all the authority

city of secular magistrates with insolence, and set at naught all civil government with contempt, especially so far forth as it would restrain their exorbitant vices; and they vilify *the persons*, as well as *the authority* of those rulers that are advanced to the highest of all earthly dignities. (*deus*, see the note on 2 Pet. ii. 10.) * They also do the same by *ecclesiastical* officers and their doctrine, and even by the inspired apostles themselves, who ought to be esteemed in their ministerial character, *as the glory of Christ*. (*δοξα Χριστου*. 2 Cor. viii. 23. See the paraphrase there.)

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

9 All this is directly contrary to the excellent temper and behaviour of such as are most worthy of imitation, even in their treatment of the devil himself; as, to instance in one of the highest dignity, when (according to the traditional and currently believed account) *Michael*† that eminent chief of the holy angels, was engaged in a remarkable contest with the prince of demons, as arguing against him about having the place known, where the body of *Moses* was buried, that he might have a further opportunity of tempting *Israel* to idolatry in worshipping it, for the prevention of which God, in infinite wisdom, concealed his sepulchre from them. (*Deut.* xxxiv. 6.) In this debate the archangel would not venture to do any thing, so contrary to his own holy nature, so offensive to God; and so much above his own match in the diabolical art of railing, as to return the reviling and opprobrious language of that

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NOTES.

* These seducers undoubtedly reviled *ecclesiastical*, as well as civil governors; and we are led to a thought of this by the apostle's comparing them (*ver.* 11.) to *those that perished in the gainsaying of Core against Moses and Aaron*.

† Some by *Michael* understand *Christ* himself, and others, the most eminent of all the holy angels. And Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us, (*Vol.* I. p. 338.) that "among the Talmudicks there seems to be something like the relics of the story here referred to, *viz.* of *Michael*, and the angel of death disputing or discouraging about fetching away the soul of *Moses*." But this is a different thing from disputing about the *body* of *Moses*. However Dr. *Whitby* says in his note on this verse, "that there was an altercation betwixt *Michael* the archangel, and *Samael* the prince of the devils, about the body of *Moses*, we learn from the traditions of the Jews." On this supposition, the a-

postle's arguing from some known and allowed tradition among them had, its weight in his dealing with them: And, possibly, he might know by divine revelation, that this was a *real fact*, and not an idle story, like many others of their traditions. The same may be observed with respect to what he says, *ver.* 14. about *Enoch's* prophecy. (See the note on 2 *Tim.* iii. 8.) Upon the whole, though I am far from being certain; yet, for want of a better, I incline to this *literal* interpretation, as more natural and less forced, than any other that has been offered on this difficult passage; among which the most probable of them seems to be that, which takes the *body* of *Moses*, in a *figurative* sense, to signify the *body* or *system* of *Moses's law*. But still we are at as much uncertainty about there ever having been any such dispute between *Michael* and the devil about the law, as about the *body* of *Moses*:

soul spirit; but only said, in a way of solemn rebuke, I leave you to the righteous judgment of God, to deal with you according to your wicked design of drawing his people into the most flagrant sin against his divine majesty, crown, and dignity.

10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts; in those things they corrupt themselves.

10 But these daring pretenders do not stick at vilifying and reproaching things, both civil and sacred, (see the note on *ver.* 8.) which are in their own nature so far from being evil, like the devil and his designs, that they are of eminent worth and importance; but the use, design, and benefit of which they are utter strangers to: And (as) even in those things, which they naturally know, like animals void of reason, and, by the light of nature, cannot but know to be unlawful, they, like irrational beasts, behave as though they had no principle of reason to guide or govern them; but act at such a monstrously perverse, sensual, and brutal rate, as to defile and debase themselves, beneath human nature, to the last degree.

11 Woe unto them; for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gain saying of Core.

11 The most dreadful of all woes will surely fall upon their heads; for in hating and envying those, whom they ought to have treated with respect, they are influenced by the same malignant spirit that governed Cain, when he murdered his brother Abel, only because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous: (1 John iii. 12, 15.) And, with a profusion of covetous, ambitious, and wicked desires and endeavours, (*ἐπιθυμίας*) they have vigorously exerted themselves to corrupt the gospel, (*ver.* 4.) and draw the professors of it into sin and perdition; and so have imitated the treacherous iniquity of Balaam, that mad prophet, who, had God permitted him, would have cursed Israel, and ensnared them to their ruin, for the sake of the reward which Balak the king of Moab offered him. (*Numb.* xxii. 21, &c. see the note on 2 *Pet.* ii. 16.) And they set themselves against civil government, and the inspired apostles and servants of the Lord, to resist and reproach them, (see the note on *ver.* 8.) as Corah, Dathan and Abiram, with their accomplices, did in their pride and sedition against Moses the ruler, and Aaron the high priest, for which the earth opened and swallowed them up alive, to the destroying of them all. (*Numb.* xvi. 1,—33.) Awful emblems of the worse destruction, which shall come upon these envious and ungodly men!

12 These are spots in your feasts of charity, when ye feast with you,

12 These, like odious and filthy blemishes and smears upon the face, or upon a garment, are the deformity, scandal, and defilement of your feasts of entertainment, whether they be held in a way of ci-
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you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

12 Raging waves

of the sea, foaming

out their own

shame; wandering

stars, to whom is

reserved the black-

ness of darkness for

ever.

13 Raging waves

of the sea, foaming

out their own

shame; wandering

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vil or religious society and friendship. * while they banquet with you, to gratify their luxurious appetites, without fear of the guilt they contract, or of the terrible wrath that awaits them for it. They put on false appearances; and are as useless and unstable as empty clouds that yield no water, to refresh the earth; and they are driven about by their own lusts and passions, as those light clouds are by tempestuous winds, from one error and evil way to another: And as little benefit is to be expected from them, as from trees whose fruit is blighted, withers, rots, and comes to nothing before it is ripe, like the immature fruit that drops off in autumn; (*ἀδυσταγία*) yea, as from trees that are perfectly, and as it were twice dead, to allude to these men, who, in their natural state, were dead in sin, and now by their apostacy are confirmedly so, past recovery; and they are like trees stubbed up by the roots, never to revive, or bring forth good fruit for ever, and only fit to be cast into the fire.

13 Nay, they are not only altogether and incurably useless, but horribly turbulent and pernicious. Their furious reproaches are belched out against the doctrines and disciples of Christ with noise and clamour, and threatnings of destruction, like the formidable billows of the sea in a violent storm, when it rages and foams, and casts up its own mire and dirt, (*Isa. lvii. 20.*) as these malignants do their own filthiness, while they pour out their corrupt principles, vicious inclinations, and malicious slanders, which turn to their own shame. Under all their pretences to be lights and stars for the guidance of others, they wander from the truth and holiness of the gospel to mislead their followers; and are like the planets, which in themselves are dark bodies, and continually shifting their places; or like shining meteors which are called shooting or falling stars. They make a sudden blaze, and soon expire in darkness, are fleeting in all their ways, and run about from place to place to spread their wicked principles, temper, and courses. So highly aggravated are their crimes, that, instead of their boasted light and their sensual pleasures, the horrors of the thickest darkness, misery, and black despair are laid up in store for them, by the righteous judgment of God, to be their dismal portion, without the least dawn of comfort or hope, to all eternity.

NOTE

* It does not appear to me what *feasts* affection, which were used among these were, whether entertainments in or *Christians*; and therefore the phrase token of civil friendship, or of religious phrase leaves it undetermined.

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14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

14 And even *Enoch*, the seventh person recorded in the line of descendent from *Adam*, (*Gen. v. 3,—18.*) foretold, in a generally received traditional prophecy, (see the note on *ver. 9.*) such things so long ago, as are truly applicable to the sin and condemnation of these very men, saying, Observe with attention and reverend awe, the Lord Christ, the promised Messiah, is coming, and in due time will certainly appear in all his majesty and glory, with a retinue of myriads, even an innumerable company of his holy ones, (*angels with*) angels and saints, to their everlasting joy. (*Matth. xxv. 31. and 1 Thess. iii. 13.*)

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

15 He will then sit on the throne of his glory to arraign all mankind before him, and pass a decisive sentence upon them severally, according to their respective characters; and particularly to reprove, convict, condemn, and punish all that shall then be found to be wicked and ungodly among them. He will severely reckon with them for all their impious works, which they have wrought with premeditated malice, and for all the virulent speeches which these licentious sinners have thrown out upon his person, gospel, and cause, and upon his members and faithful servants for his sake, which he will resent in the day of judgment, as done against himself. (*Matth. xxv. 45.*)

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their smooth speaketh great swelling words, having mens persons in admiration, because of advantage.

16 The false teachers we are speaking of, will meet with the heaviest doom in that awful day: For they are secret murmurers against God and his providence, against magistrates and ministers, and against Christ and his followers and ways; and are continually finding fault and openly quarrelling with all his doctrines and dispensations, as being prejudiced against them, and dissatisfied with their own state and condition in the world: They, in the restless temper of their minds, pursue their own vicious inclinations to unlawful pleasures; and at the same time they talk in lofty, unintelligible, senseless strains, with high pretences to knowledge and religion; and, in the pride of their hearts, speak the most excessively vain and conceited things of themselves, that have nothing in them; and they extravagantly flatter, caress, and extol persons of their own party, especially the rich among them, be they ever so vile; because they expect to reap some worldly advantage from them, to gratify their covetous and luxurious temper.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken

17 But, my dearly beloved brethren in the Lord, let none of these things move you from your own steadfastness; nor be ye stumbled at them, *as though some strange thing had happened to you.* (*1 Pet. iv. 12.*)

spoken before of
the apostles of our
Lord Jesus Christ:

18 *How* that
they told you there
should be mockers
in the last time,
who should walk
after their own an-
godly lusts.

19 These be
they who separate
themselves, sensu-
al, having not the
Spirit.

20 But ye, belo-
ved, building up
yourselves on your
most holy faith,
praying in the Ho-
ly Ghost,

21 To grow up in all things into him, who is the head
(Eph. iv. 15.) And, together with a lively exercise
of this most holy faith, be instant in prayer, under
the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit to be-
your infirmities. (Rom. viii. 26.)

12.) To silence all such discouraging thoughts, call
to mind and reflect upon the warnings about them,
that have been given you beforehand, as by our Lord
and Saviour Jesus Christ himself; (*Matth. xxiv. 11.*)
so by his inspired apostles; (*2 Tim. iii. 1. and 2 Pet.*
iii. 2, 3.) which being now fulfilled, are a confirmation
of, rather than an objection against, the doctrines de-
livered by them.

18 Remember how plainly they have told you,
that in this concluding period of the Jewish church
and state, and commencement of the last dispensation
of grace, which is to continue to the end of the world,
there certainly would arise profane scornful deriders of
every thing that is sacred, and particularly of Christ's
coming to judgment; (*2 Pet. iii. 3, 4.*) a set of aban-
doned men, who treat these solemn things with con-
tempt and ridicule, that they may be the more easy in
indulgences of their corrupt inclinations, according to
the full bent of their own wicked hearts, that have
cast off the fear of God.

19 These are the very men, of whom our blessed
Lord and his apostles warned you; men that make
factions and divisions in the church, alienating them-
selves from the true apostles, servants, disciples, and
doctrines of Christ, and forming separate parties of
their own sortment, as though they were more holy
than others; whereas, in reality, they are mere sen-
sualists, governed by animal appetites, lusts, and pas-
sions; and are entirely destitute of the enlightening,
purifying, and sanctifying gifts and graces of the Holy
Spirit.

20 But as to you, my dear Christian friends, take
heed of being misled by men of such corrupt principles
and practices. But go on by divine assistance, with in-
tegrity and faithfulness in your holy profession; and
in order hereunto, persist in seeking, by all proper
and appointed means, your own and your fellow-
Christians (see the note on *Eph. iv. 32.*) spiritual es-
tablishment and advances in grace, holiness, and com-
fort, upon the foundation of faith, which is laid in the
doctrine of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ him-
self being the chief corner stone; (*Eph. ii. 20.*) and
upon that principle of faith in you, which purifies the
heart, works by love, and overcomes this world;
(*Acts xv. 9. Gal. vi. 6. and 1 John v. 4.*) and which
derives all grace out of Christ's fulness to enable you
to grow up in all things into him, who is the head
(*Eph. iv. 15.*) And, together with a lively exercise
of this most holy faith, be instant in prayer, under
the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit to be-
your infirmities. (Rom. viii. 26.)

21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22. And of some have compassion, making a difference.

23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; having even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,

25. In this most excellent way of proceeding, let it be your constant study and endeavour to approve yourselves to God, as those that sincerely and fervently love him, and delight to keep his commandments;

(1 *John* v. 3.) and be careful to cultivate this love in one another, as also to maintain a sweet and experimental sense of God's special love to yourselves, to influence you thereunto, as those that are looking, hoping, and longing, in a prepared state and frame, for the final manifestations, fruits, and effects of the gracious and merciful sentence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, unto your complete deliverance from all sin and sorrow, and admission to all the blessings of eternal life, even for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 *Pet.* i. 13.)

22. And as to such among you, that may be seduced into any error or sin, great prudence is to be used in a different manner of dealing with them, according to their different circumstances. Some that have been staggered, and in measure drawn aside, through their own inadvertence, ignorance, and weakness, and the subtilty of deceivers, ye should treat with all tenderness, meekness, condescension, and endearing kindness, and with a friendly and compassionate concern to recover and establish them.

23. And others that have gone further lengths, and seem to be obstinate and hardened, like those who seduced them, ye ought to deal more sharply with, by faithfully setting before them their guilt and danger, the awful threatnings of God's word, and the dreadful wrath and ruin they expose themselves to, and by passing a church-censure upon them, if needful, that ye may awaken their just fears of persisting in the evil of their ways: This is the likeliest method, by the blessing of God, to reclaim them and prevent their eternal destruction; and to pluck them, with a sort of holy violence, as brands out of the fire, that were very near being consumed by it. In all which ye should be influenced by an utter detestation of every thing that has any defilement in it; and should act with a holy resolution to avoid, and have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness; (*Eph.* v. 11.) in like manner as the Jews, according to the law of Moses, were not to touch any unclean thing; a garment, that had the plague of leprosy in it, was to be burnt. (*Lev.* v. 2, &c. and xiii. 52.)

24. Now, to conclude with a solemn doxology, which belongs, as to all the persons in the adorable Godhead, so particularly to our Lord Jesus Christ,

25. In this most excellent way of proceeding, let it be your constant study and endeavour to approve yourselves to God, as those that sincerely and fervently love him, and delight to keep his commandments;

26. And as to such among you, that may be seduced into any error or sin, great prudence is to be used in a different manner of dealing with them, according to their different circumstances. Some that have been staggered, and in measure drawn aside, through their own inadvertence, ignorance, and weakness, and the subtilty of deceivers, ye should treat with all tenderness, meekness, condescension, and endearing kindness, and with a friendly and compassionate concern to recover and establish them.

27. And others that have gone further lengths, and seem to be obstinate and hardened, like those who seduced them, ye ought to deal more sharply with, by faithfully setting before them their guilt and danger, the awful threatnings of God's word, and the dreadful wrath and ruin they expose themselves to, and by passing a church-censure upon them, if needful, that ye may awaken their just fears of persisting in the evil of their ways: This is the likeliest method, by the blessing of God, to reclaim them and prevent their eternal destruction; and to pluck them, with a sort of holy violence, as brands out of the fire, that were very near being consumed by it. In all which ye should be influenced by an utter detestation of every thing that has any defilement in it; and should act with a holy resolution to avoid, and have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness; (*Eph.* v. 11.) in like manner as the Jews, according to the law of Moses, were not to touch any unclean thing; a garment, that had the plague of leprosy in it, was to be burnt. (*Lev.* v. 2, &c. and xiii. 52.)

28. Now, to conclude with a solemn doxology, which belongs, as to all the persons in the adorable Godhead, so particularly to our Lord Jesus Christ,

sailing, and to pre-
sent you faultless
before the presence
of his glory with
exceeding joy.

Christ, * whom we have been speaking of under such characters, as are peculiarly suited to your encouragement and relief under all your present troubles; (ver. 14, 15, 21.) I would express it in the following lofty and endearing strain, To him who has almighty power originally in himself, as God, and all office-authority and qualifications, as Mediator; and, having graciously undertaken, is as willing as able, to preserve you from apostacy, and from irrecoverably stumbling and falling into, and by the errors of the wicked; and, after your state of warfare is accomplished, to present you to himself, and to his Father, at his second coming, a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish; (Eph. v. 27.) and should stand with complete acceptance in his immediate presence, when he shall appear in all his glory, and ye shall appear with him in glory, (Col. iii. 4.) and with triumphant and ecstatic joy, and all the holy angels and glorified saints, together with the sacred Three, shall exceedingly rejoice with you.

25 To the only
wife God our Sa-
viour, be glory and
majesty, dominion
and power, both
now and ever. A-
men.

25 To this God our Saviour, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is infinitely, originally, essentially and communicatively the only wife God: To him, as well as to those other adorable persons, bescribed, as is equally due, all the glory of his divine nature and attributes, as God, and of all his love and grace, desigus, undertakings, and performances, as likewise all the grandeur of his heavenly Majesty, as God-man mediator, together with universal rule and government, might and authority, over all persons and things, in the kingdom of providence and of grace, now, henceforth, and for evermore. In this ascription of glory, may we and all the saints and angels join, as with one heart and voice! *Amen*, to let it be, and so it shall be.

RECollections.

What an honour do the best of men think it, to be the faithful servants of Jesus Christ! Such are heartily desirous that all the blessings of divine love, mercy, and peace

NOTE.

* It seems to me, that the divine person, here most immediately intended, is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is principally spoken of all along in the preceding context, and is often styled, by way of eminence, *The Saviour*, and *God our Saviour*, as in Eph. v. 23. Phil. iii. 20. Tit. ii. 13, and 2 Pet. i. 1; and is here called the *only wife God*, (ver. 25.) not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit, but only of all idols. (See the note on John xvii. 3.) * And as his presenting us faultless before the presence of his glory

manifestly relates to the time of his glorious appearing to judgment, for executing a dreadful sentence on the ungodly, and shewing mercy to believers unto eternal life; (ver. 14, 15, 21.) so this exactly agrees with the work that is peculiarly ascribed to him, as *the Saviour of the body*, and head of the church. (Eph. v. 23.—27.) But I do not find that the presentation of the church at the last day is ever ascribed to God the Father. (See my volume of sermons on *Jesus Christ God-man*, page 64, 65.)

peace may be multiplied to the chosen and called of God; and they lay themselves out, with diligence, to promote the common salvation of all that believe in Jesus, and to excite their fervent zeal for preserving the doctrines of Christ, just as they were once delivered to the saints under the inspiration of his Spirit. How careful should all Christians be to guard against turning the doctrine of the grace of God into licentiousness; and against such deceivers, as would slyly insinuate themselves into their affections, and overthrow the purity of the gospel, especially in its fundamental articles, relating to God and our Lord Jesus Christ. The corrupters of this faith are wicked men, whom the sovereign and holy God has of old determined to punish for their impieties, with everlasting destruction in all the horrors of the thickest darkness, misery, and despair. Thus he has dealt with the fallen angels, and the flagitious sinners of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; and thus he will deal with the persecutors of his people, who, like *Cain*, hate and would murder them, for righteousness sake; and, like *Balaam*, would curse and ruin them, for their own secular interest; and like *Corab* and his company, set themselves in opposition to the servants of the Lord, and even to civil magistrates and all wholesome laws, through their own ignorance of their excellency, and through brutal propensities to what they cannot but know, by the light of nature, to be very fordid and desiling. These, under all their vain boasts, are an unstable, deluded, and deluding sort of men; haughty deriders of all that is sacred and worthy; destitute of the Spirit of God; and perfect sensualists, that aim at nothing but worldly gratifications. But, what a reproach are persons of these odious characters to Christian or civil society, in their feasting, with love and choice, together. They are not only useless and unprofitable, but injurious and dangerous. And when Christ shall appear in his glory, with an innumerable company of attending saints and angels, he will justly condemn and punish them for all their impious and malicious calumnies upon him and his people, doctrines and ways. But believers need not be staggered at, or by them, since our Lord himself and his apostles have given fair warning of them before-hand; nor need they return railing for railing, in vindication of the truth and of themselves, but only refer them to that God, who judges righteously. But O what a happiness is it, amidst all these trials, to go forward in faith and prayer under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and to maintain our love to God and one another, and a sense of his love to us in an humble, patient, and joyful expectation of the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life! How greatly are those professors to be pitied, that are in danger of falling into the snare of deceivers! With what gentleness are the weak among them to be treated and allured! And with what holy violence, as by the terrors of the Lord, are the more obstinate and daring to be snatched, like brands out of the fire! May all glory be ascribed to the only wise God, inclusive of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who is able in himself, and authorised in his office, to preserve us from all apostacy, and to present us without spot or blemish, and with unspeakable joy, before the presence of his own and his Father's glory, at his second appearing without sin unto salvation! May we be found among this happy number at the great day of account! *Amen.*

A PRAC.

A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION
OF THE
REVELATION

OF
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE,
IN THE FORM OF A
PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE REVELATION.

THE writer of this sacred book appears with good evidence to have been the apostle *John*, (Vid. *Mill*. Prolegom. pag. 19,—21. and see *Twells's* examination of the late new text and version of the New Testament) who is called *the Divine*, perhaps, because he had the special honour of God's giving him the extraordinary prophetic revelation contained in this book; or because he was an eminent advocate for the divinity of Christ, as appears in his gospel and epistles.

This important revelation, which is most commonly thought to have been written about the year of our Lord 96 or 97, may be cast into two principal parts. One, which lies in the three first chapters, and is delivered in an epistolary form to the seven famous churches in the proconsular *Asia*, relates to the then present state of those churches, and the things that would soon be fulfilled in them.—The epistles thus directed to them were indeed designed, like other parts of scripture, for our instruction, in such cautions and encouragements, promises and threatnings, as are applicable to other persons and churches, in like circumstances, through all succeeding generations. But I could never see sufficient ground to think that they, as some suppose, were like the rest of this book, prophetic of a successive state of churches from the apostles days to the end of the world, which should correspond, in order of time, to that of these seven churches, all of which were written to, as considered in their then present and contemporary circumstances, and not in what they would be one after another, according to the order in which the epistles were directed to them: Nor do I apprehend the characters of each of those churches to be distinct enough to mark out those i-

imaginable

imaginable periods, which, by the help of a fruitful invention and forced constructions, have been assigned to them by different learned writers with very different application: But some of them are as applicable to several ages, as to any one age of the church; and perhaps, there is hardly any particular age, except the last that is yet to come, in which there are not some churches or professing Christians, to which many of the things may be applied that are found in *all* these epistles; and this book of prophecy speaks of a glorious state of the church that shall be on earth in the last days, which none of these epistles, and least of all the last of them, can be supposed to exhibit to us.

The other principal, and by far greatest, part of the prophetic revelation is introduced *chap. iv.* and, as I conceive, is carried on from thence to the end of the book, setting forth a regular series of events, which should come to pass in successive periods, relating to the *Roman* empire, and the church of Christ, as chiefly concerned with it, through all ages, from the time of the apostle's writing, to the consummation of all things, which shall issue in the utter destruction of hypocritical and formal professors, and all Christ's enemies, and in glorious days on earth, and the everlasting joy and triumph of the saints in heaven.

The meaning of these wonderful prophecies has been searched into, with great care and diligence, by many learned and pious men of former and later ages: But their interpretations, in various instances, are so very different and contradictory, and several of them so evidently proved by after facts to be entire mistakes, that I dare not presume to be very positive in determining upon all the events, that answer even such predictions, as may justly be supposed to have been already fulfilled; much less in fixing the exact time for the accomplishment of those that are still to be fulfilled in their respective seasons; concerning which we must needs be under some suspense, unless we could certainly know the point of time, from whence we are to begin the computation of such prophetic days or years, as are laid out for their period.

It may be said of the prophecies of this book, as it was to *Daniel*, when he heard, but understood not, and cried out, *O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?* In answer to which he said, *Go thy way, Daniel, for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.* (*Dan. xii. 8, 9.*) intimating that they are not to be thoroughly understood till they be all completely accomplished; and even the predictions of our blessed Lord about his death, resurrection, and exaltation, were not clearly understood by his disciples, till they were fulfilled; but then they remembered that he had said these things to them, and that these things were written of him. (*John ii. 22. and xii. 13,—16.*) Nor did the apostle *Peter* understand the full meaning of what Christ foretold about the baptism of the Holy Ghost as to be extended to the *Gentiles*, till the *Holy Ghost* fell on *Cornelius* and his company, as it had before on *Jewish* believers; but then he remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said, *John* indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. (*Acts xii. 15, 16.*)

It seems to me, that one great design of prophecies is to leave our thoughts under some obscurity about their precise meaning and time of accomplishment, till events explain them; lest a certain knowledge beforehand of the things pointed to, and of the times in which they were to take place, should give umbrage to some reigning powers on earth; and should disconcert the ordinary course of human affairs, and put some men upon measures, which they otherwise would never have thought of, to fulfil the predictions; and thereupon the accomplishment of the prophecies, in their season, should be ascribed to the craft and management of men, rather than to the wisdom and power of God. But his bringing them about, one after another, in their proper time and order, without any design in the instruments of them to fulfil divine predictions, (as was the case of *Joseph's* brethren, in selling him into *Egypt*; and of the *Jews* and *Romans* in concurring to crucify our blessed Lord) reserves the entire glory of the whole to his own over-ruling conduct; and is an undeniable testimony to his infinite unerring foreknowledge of the free actions of men, and to his all-governing providence in whatsoever comes to pass: and as fast as any of the prophecies of this book are manifestly fulfilled, they are a further confirmation of the truth of Christianity, and of the faith and hope of the church, with respect to all that remains to be still performed; and are a rich encouragement to their patience under all their troubles, which in every period are foretold as to issue in bright scenes of prosperity and glory. And when the whole scheme shall be finished, every part will appear in its proper place and order, and a divine beauty will be seen to spread conspicuously through it all.

We may therefore, with some probability at least, humbly attempt to settle the interpretation of the prophecies by *historical* facts, as far as they have been hitherto fulfilled, which reach to the time of the *fifth* vial, according to some expositors; or of the *sixth*, according to others: And yet it is hard always to adjust even *these* with certainty, because there are some other events of Providence, that may seem to be as fairly applicable to those parts of the prophecies. But, I think, the late learned Mr. *Lowman* has, upon the whole, matched *facts* with *accomplished* predictions, better than any other writer that has fallen under my notice. And as nothing ever puzzled my thoughts on this book more, than the *synchronisms*, or contemporary events, which commentators have almost universally supposed to be represented in the seven epistles to the churches of *Asia*, and in the *seal* and *book*-prophecies, as some distinguish them, or, as others call them, the *open* and the *sealed* book; so this gentleman, in his elaborate and judicious paraphrase and notes, and in his preface to the whole, seems to me to have settled the periods of the *seals*, *trumpets*, and *vials*, with a good degree of probability, in a regularly connected, and progressive order of time, from the beginning to the end: And therefore I have mostly followed him in *historical* facts; and have in a manner done so entirely, with respect to the *successive* course of every period, which is carried on by *seven* epistles, *seven* seals, *seven* trumpets, and *seven* vials, till all shall end in the glory of the *millenium*, and of the heavenly state.

And

And as my design is, through divine guidance, to set this, as well as the other parts of the New Testament, in as plain, practical, and easy a light, as I can, before the minds of *common Christians*; the practical view is intermingled and pursued, more than I have met with in any other paraphrase: But as large quotations of ancient authorities would not be much to their edification, and would swell this volume to a disproportionate bulk, which has already too far exceeded my expectation and design, I shall, generally, content myself with referring to the authorities which he, or others have quoted to support the application of histories to the hitherto fulfilled prophecies, in the course of the exposition. *The contents* of all at the head of each chapter, and as put together at the beginning of this volume, will give the reader a compendious view of the whole scheme.

C H A P. I.

A preface opens the divine original, design, and importance of this book, 1,—3. The apostle John, the writer of it, salutes the seven churches of Asia, wishing them grace and peace from God the Father, Son, and Spirit, in distinctive economical characters of them, 4,—8. Declares when, where, and how, the revelations were made to him, 9,—12. And gives an account of his first vision, in which he saw Christ appearing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and holding seven stars in his right-hand, which were emblematical of the seven churches, and their respective pastors; and describes his appearing in such strong and lively figures of majesty and glory, as were suited to the encouragement of true believers, and the terror of backsliders and apostates, 13,—20.

TEXT.

THE revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by

PARAPHRASE.

THIS book contains a prophetic revelation from Jesus Christ, the exalted Saviour, to whom, as man and the great prophet of the church, God the Father gave it in commission, * that he might make known to his servants and saints those things which must soon begin to be fulfilled, and then be carried on, through their several periods, in as certain predictions, as if they were present facts, relating chiefly

to

NOTE.

* As Christ sustained the character of a prophet in human nature, God the Father is spoken of with great propriety, according to the divine economy, as giving this revelation to him, that, in the execution of his office, he might communicate it by his angel to John: But his understanding being infinite, as God, he, in that consideration of him, had no need of such a revelation; and he, who

sent his angel to shew these things, is styled the Lord God of the holy prophets, (chap. xxii. 6.) which is a magnificent description of the only true God, and seems to be meant of the same divine person, who there says a little afterwards, (ver. 16.) *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things, and these things are here called The revelation of Jesus Christ.*

his angel unto his servant John :

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand.

4 JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia : Grace be unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come ; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne ;

to the Roman empire, and his church as concerned with it, till they be completed at the consummation of all things : And Jesus, the sovereign Lord of all the angelic host, communicated them by the ministration of an holy angel, whom he sent with authority to notify them in the following visions to me, his servant and apostle, whose name is *John* :

2 Who have heretofore wrote an authentic historical account of Christ, as the eternal Word of God, (*ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ*) who is God, and was made flesh, and dwell amongst us ; (John i. 1, 14.) and have bore witness to him, under divine inspiration, as the only true Messiah, and to the substance of all the doctrines which he taught, and the miracles which I saw him perform to confirm them ; and shall now faithfully relate the further revelations, which he has made to me.

3 Happy is the man, who diligently reads and considers ; and happier still are they, that attend to, receive, and understand the design and meaning of the important things pointed out in the prophecy, which I am about to deliver, and that observe and compare the predictions therein written, and the events of Providence answerable to them, and bear them upon their minds, and lay them to heart, with an humble and holy temper and deportment correspondent to them : For the time, in which some of them must begin to be accomplished, draws on apace ; and, in comparison with the endless eternity that will follow, it cannot be long, before they shall all be as certainly fulfilled, as if they were instantly to come to pass.

4 NOW, according to the revelation, and commission to write it, which Jesus Christ signified to me by his angel, I *John*, send the first part of it in the following epistles from him ; one to each of the seven principal churches, that are planted in the lesser Asia. May the divine favour, and its saving effects and manifestations in a special work of grace in your souls ; and may a sense of that free favour, together with all manner of happiness, temporal, and especially spiritual, unto eternal life, abound towards all and every one of you from God the Father, who, under the notion of deity, the character of which he sustains in the scheme of providence and salvation, * is to be considered as *from everlasting to everlasting*

NOTE

* Which is, and was, and is to come, cannot, I think, be considered as a personal distinctive character of God the Father, merely as the Father, to the ex-

clusion of the Son and Spirit ; because, what is nearly equivalent to this, and appears to be said as much personal, is affirmed of the Son, as when it is said, that

everlasting God, (Pl. xc. 2.) invariably and unchangeably the same in his being and perfections, councils and designs, and ever has been, is, and will be the same in his love and care of his people; and from the divine Spirit, who is the sovereign author of all spiritual gifts and graces, and of every diversity of his supernatural operations; (1 Cor. xii. 4, 7,—11.) which for the variety and perfection of them, and with a reference to the seven churches, may be called *seven*, under the denomination of *spirits*, as *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*; (John iii. 6.) and who is ever present with the Father, as before his throne, ready to execute his will in every thing, and particularly in what relates to the safety and welfare of the church!

3 And from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth: Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

5, 6 And may all these blessings be multiplied to you from Jesus Christ, through his mediation and merit, who, as a prophet, bears a faithful testimony to his Father's mind and will, and to his own character, as the Son of God and the true Messiah; and who, as a priest, having offered up himself a sacrifice for sin, was in token of its acceptance, raised from the dead, as the head of his body, the church, and as the very first that ever rose to immortal life, and *that* as the pattern, pledge, and first fruits of their resurrection to it after him; (see Col. i. 18. and the note on 1 Cor. xv. 20.) and, in consequence of this, he, as the due reward of his atoning death, was exalted to his throne of glory, with an all fulness of authority and dominion, as *King of kings and Lord of lords*, (chap. xix. 16.) and *the head of all principalities and powers* on earth, as well as in heaven, for the preservation and government of his people, and for restraining and subduing all his and their enemies! (Eph. i. 20,—22. and Phil. ii. 8,—11.) Unto him who has freely loved us, and given himself for us, *an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smell-*

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that he is *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last*; ver. 8, 11, 17. and chap. xxii. 13; and perhaps in chap. xxi. 6. But if it be there understood of the Father, it shews that the very same divine characters are personally applied to both. (See the note below on ver. 8.)—But *he which is, and was, and is to come*, is a description of the divine nature, very properly applied to the Father, when he and the Son and Spirit are represented as sustaining their respective parts in all dispensations, particularly relating to the church; for, in this economy, God the

Father is to be considered as *maintaining the prerogatives of deity*, and the Son and Spirit as acting either *from him, or towards him*: Accordingly, in the close of this verse, the Spirit is represented as *before the throne*, to act from the Father, toward the church; and in the following verses, the Son is represented as acting toward the Father for the church in his priestly office, as well as from the Father toward the church in his prophetic and kingly offices; and he is mentioned last, because the apostle designed to enlarge upon his character.

ing favour, (Eph. v. 2.) and has cleansed us from the guilt and power of our sins by an effectual application of the virtue of his own precious blood, which *he shed for the remission of them*, and for *redeeming us from all iniquity*; (Matth. xxvi. 28. and Tit. ii. 14.) and has advanced us, in our relation to God, even his Father, and our Father in him, to the high honour of *kings, or princes*, in a spiritual sense, that hold our dignities under him, in an entire dependence on him, and that *have power to prevail with God in prayer*, (Gen. xxxii. 28.) and are *heirs of the kingdom of glory*, (Jam. ii. 5.) and enabled to govern our own spirits, and to overcome sin, Satan, and the world, and are sanctified to his service, as *priests*, that have near access to God, and *offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ*; (1 Pet. ii. 5.) unto this blessed, lovely, and loving Jesus, who is divinely glorious in himself and in his office, be ascribed all possible honour, and be paid all solemn acknowledgments of his sovereign and universal dominion, from henceforth to all eternity. *Amen*, so be it, and so it shall be.

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: even so, Amen.

7 Observe, for your encouragement, the happy issue of all the following prophecies, to put an end to the afflicted state of the church, and complete their salvation, and to pour confusion upon all their enemies, the Lord Jesus will quickly appear with awful majesty to judge the world at his second coming, which will be like the *God who makes the clouds his chariot*, (Pl. civ. 3.) in illustrious clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, amidst surrounding angels, according to his own, and ancient predictions. (Dan. vii. 13. and Matth. xxiv. 30, 31.) And *that* appearance in human nature will be so open and visible, and so attempered by the clouds to mitigate the brightest rays of his divine glory, and accommodate them to corporal sight, that all mankind shall see him with their bodily eyes; and they particularly, that joined in his crucifixion, (Zech. xii. 10.) and never afterwards looked by faith to him, with penitent sorrow, for the remission of their sins, shall behold him with terror and anguish of heart for having despised and rejected him: And not only the tribes of *Israel*, but all persecuting powers, and people of all nations of the earth that remain in impenitence and unbelief, shall bitterly lament their miserable case, because of his coming to call them to a strict and severe account for all that they have said and done against him. Even so it certainly shall be; and all who now by faith look for it, and shall then be joyful spectators of it, cannot but consent to, and approve of it, as righte-

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, faith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

11 During this state of exile, on a certain first day of the week, which is commonly styled, by way of eminence, *the Lord's Day*, for like reason as the instituted memorial of his death, is called *the Lord's Supper*, (1 Cor. xi. 20.) and which, according to the universal practice of gospel-churches, I observed, in commemoration of his resurrection from the dead, as a holy day to him, (see the notes on John xx. 26.

12 To add the greater weight to these things, for the terror of his enemies, and the support and comfort of true believers, he, who is to come in all this majesty and glory, said of himself, (*ver. 11, 17. and chap. xxii. 12, 13.*) * I am from eternity to eternity, am also the author and finisher of the works of providence and grace, and of this revelation concerning many of them, and will accordingly accomplish them in their order from the beginning to the end; and so may be fitly represented by the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, which are *Alpha* and *Omega*: And he who said these things, affirmed of himself, that he, in his divine nature and perfections, is the Lord God Almighty. (See *Isa. ix. 6.*)

13 To proceed then to the *first part* of the revelation made to me, I John the evangelist and apostle, who am also your brother in the faith, and in the family of God; and am a fellow-sufferer with all those that are, or ever shall be, persecuted for the sake of Christ, and an heir with them of all the blessings of his kingdom of grace and glory, and am called and enabled with them, through his strengthenings, to exercise all humble submission, resignation, and patience in sufferings for him, and quiet waiting for his glorious kingdom; I was banished by the emperor *Dominian* to a confinement in the mountainous island of *Patmos*, merely for my adherence to Christ, and faithfully preaching his gospel, whose name is called *the Word of God*, (*chap. xix. 13.*) and for the witness I bore to the truth and importance of the things that I had seen and heard from him. (*ver. 2.*)

14 During this state of exile, on a certain first day of the week, which is commonly styled, by way of eminence, *the Lord's Day*, for like reason as the instituted memorial of his death, is called *the Lord's Supper*, (1 Cor. xi. 20.) and which, according to the universal practice of gospel-churches, I observed, in commemoration of his resurrection from the dead, as a holy day to him, (see the notes on John xx. 26.

ous, saying, with solemn applause, *Amen*. (Chap. xvi. 7. and xix. 1, 2.)

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* As Christ is the person last mentioned, and is represented as the revealer of these things to his servant John; (*ver. 1.*) so it plainly appears by the parallel places referred to in the paraphrase, that these titles are ascribed to him: And as the Father was described by like characters, *ver. 4.* (see the note there) it gives us a strong attestation to the true and proper divinity of the Son of God, as the

same in essence with the Father; and so may be considered as a description of the same deity, whenever it is applied to either of them, not to distinguish one from the other of the adorable persons of the Trinity, as such, but to distinguish the Divine Being from all that are not by nature God, as it is used for that purpose in a description of God absolutely, as such, *Iso. xli. 4.* and *xlviii. 12.*

Act xx. 6. and *Col.* ii. 16.) I was on that day in a spiritual frame, and employed in religious meditations and exercises; and, while I was so, the spirit of prophecy came upon me, (as it formerly had done on ancient prophets) and revealed the following things to me; which were introduced by my being alarmed with the hearing of an exceeding loud articulate voice behind me, like the strong and solemn sound of a trumpet, such as was heard at the giving of the law on Mount *Sinai*. (*Exod.* xix. 16.)

11 Saying, I am Alpha, and Omega, the first and the last, and, What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto *Ephesus*, and unto *Smyrna*, and unto *Pergamos*, and unto *Thyatira*, and unto *Sardis*, and unto *Philadelphia*, and unto *Laodicea*.

11 The voice which I perfectly and distinctly heard and understood, said to me, I, that Jesus, for whose sake you are banished to the ill *Palmos*, am he, who called myself, (*ver.* 8. see the note there) and now repeat it, the more deeply to impress you with a solemn reverence of me, and regard to my words, even I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the author and finisher of all things, relating to the world and the church, from the beginning of the creation to the end of ages. And he then strictly charged me, saying, Take care that you faithfully record in a book the things which I am making known in vision to you for the instruction and admonition of the universal church; and send such particulars of it, in my name, to the seven most noted churches of *Asia*, as belong to them respectively, and they are most immediately concerned in, namely, to the churches which are seated at the following cities; to that at *Ephesus*, and that at *Smyrna*, and that at *Pergamos*, and that at *Thyatira*, and that at *Sardis*, and that at *Philadelphia*, and that at *Laodicea*.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

12 And thereupon I turned myself about with eager desire to see from whence this awful voice proceeded, which directed itself to me, and having set my face that way, I had a clear supernatural vision of a candlestick of pure gold, which may be spoken of in the plural number, as consisting of seven branches to hold seven lamps, answerable to the number of the churches, to which I was ordered to write, and like the seven branches that were made by divine appointment, and placed in the tabernacle of the Lord, (*Exod.* xxv. 31, 32.) and may be considered as emblematical of the light of doctrine, holiness, and comfort, which the churches receive from Christ, and hold forth to the world, as they are all one in him.

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the

13 And as the Jehovah of *Israel* dwelt in that holy house, and the priest used to stand in the midst of the branches when he lighted the lamps, and particularly the middle one, which went right up from the shaft among them; (*Numb.* viii. 2, 3; see *Ainsworth* there) so I plainly beheld, in the midst of these emblematical candlesticks, a divinely glorious person in

pope with a golden girdle.

the form of an illustrious man, which left me under no manner of doubt but that it was the Messiah, who was prophesied of, and frequently spoke of himself, as *the Son of Man*: He appeared to me as clothed with a magnificent, rich, and splendid robe, like unto, though of incomparably greater lustre than that of the *Jewish* high priest; a garment which covered him all over down to his feet, and was a fit emblem of his priestly robe of glorious and perfect righteousness, which covers him, and all his members, even down to the lowest and meanest of them: And to shew how near the concerns of his church lie to his heart, and how ready he is to discharge his priestly office on their behalf; he appeared as girded about his breast with a golden girdle of inestimable worth and beauty, far surpassing the curious and costly girdle of the high priest's *ephod*, (Exod. xxxix. 5.) with which he used to gird himself over his breast.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

14 The appearance of his *person* also was transcendently majestic and glorious, like that of *the Ancient of days*, as represented in vision to the prophet *Daniel*, (chap vii. 9.) His head and his hair upon it, shone like the *Schechinah* of old, which was always an emblem of the divine majesty and glory; and his hairs appeared like a venerable crown, as pure and clean as the finest washed wool, and shining with a lustre as dazzling as the whitest snow; and his eyes sparkled, and as it were streamed out with light as piercing and awful, as the brightest flame of a strong and clear fire; a lively emblem of his penetrating wisdom, knowledge, and influence to discover the secrets of all hearts, and to purify and refine them, or else to consume them, as the hottest fire doth the materials that are capable of being acted upon by it.

15 And his feet were like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

15 And his feet seemed to be, for strength and steadiness, purity and beauty, in all his ways and dispensations, to the joy of the saints, and terror of his enemies, like solid pillars of burnished metal, that had been thoroughly melted and refined, and appeared as red hot, as though it were still burning in a fiery furnace: And his voice, according to the language of his word and providence, was as loud and thundering, dreadful and astonishing to the wicked, as the roaring of the sea, when its huge collection of waters are thrown into the most violent commotion by a storm.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was

16 And, to add still further to the majesty and grandeur of his appearance, as also to shew his effectual care of his faithful servants, he was represented to me as holding in his right hand, the emblem of favour and power for preservation and guidance, seven stars, that were upheld and enlightened by him, to be the

was as the sun
shineth in his
strength.

the ministerial and subordinate lights of their respective seven churches in *Asia*; which is likewise applicable to all succeeding pastors, as he has promised to *be with them always, even to the end of the world*: (Matth. xxviii. 20.) And there seemed to issue out of his mouth a sharp sword of two edges which cut on both sides; a proper emblem of the power of both his law and gospel, of the justice of his government, and the efficacy of his word, as proceeding from his mouth, for cutting sinners to the heart, and cutting off all superfluity of naughtiness from believers, and for cutting down his implacable enemies: And, as to the light of his countenance, it was as bright and dazzling, and its smiles were as cheering and reviving as the sun in the firmament, when it shines in its full strength with unclouded beams at noon-day, like his appearance on the mount of transfiguration, (Matth. xvii. 2.) and suitable to his character, as *the Sun of Righteousness, that rises with healing under his wings*. (Malach. iv. 2.)

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.

17 And when in my vision I beheld this awful and glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus, I was so surprised and overwhelmed at it, under a consciousness of my own guilt and unworthiness, that all the powers of animal nature failed; and I, like one in a swoon, fell prostrate at his feet ready to expire. He then, knowing, and having compassion on my infirmity, seemed to stretch forth his right hand, the emblem of his gracious and almighty power, to revive and raise me up; and laid, to encourage and comfort me, as the angel did to *Daniel*, (chap. x. 10,—12.) Do not give way to distressing fear, as though I meant any ill to you, or to my church and people! No, I the divine Saviour, am unchangeably the same in myself in my office, and in my love and care, as I ever have been; and as I have begun, so I will perfect all that concerns both you and them, and all dispensations relating to them.

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.

18 I am the great and only mediator, who ever live, as the *living One* (*ὁ ζῶν*) in my divine nature, to secure the interests of my church, and was once put to death in my human nature, to make reconciliation with God by my atoning sacrifice for them: But observe with faith, hope, delight, and holy confidence in me, that I am now risen, and live for ever in the nature which died, as their high priest and righteous advocate, and as their Lord and King: This is ratified in heaven, and you ought to say, *Amen*. And to satisfy you that all shall end in the greatest happiness of my people, I further assure you, that, in consequence of my death and resurrection, I have the power

power of death and of the invisible world, to save or destroy the souls of them that are in a separate state, and to raise their dead bodies from the grave, like one who has the keys, which are an emblem of right and power, (*I/a. xxii. 22.*) for unlocking their doors, and for opening or shutting the gate of heaven, to admit those into it that die in the Lord, and to exclude those from it that die in their sins, and shut them up with the devil and his angels.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

19 He then repeated his charge to me, (*ver. 11.*) saying, Write all these things down, which you have seen exhibited in this vision, that they may be preserved for the instruction of the present and future generations; and record the things which are further to be revealed to you, relating to the present state of the church; as also the things which shall certainly come to pass, in their proper series, from age to age, till time shall be no more.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

20 Now, to explain *two* of the principal emblems that you have seen in this vision, The covert meaning of the figurative representations, which have been made of the seven stars that were held in my right hand, and of the seven branches of the golden candlestick, is this: By *the seven stars*, are signified my *seven messengers*, (*αγγελοι*) or *embassadors* to, or *pastors* of the seven churches, who have the honour of being set over them in the Lord, and, who as stars, which I have lighted up and taken into my favour and protection, are to shine, like angels, in the purity of their doctrine and holiness of their lives, for the direction of those that are committed to their charge: And by *the seven branches of the candlestick*, are most immediately meant the seven churches of *Asia* themselves, and, by just construction, all other churches, that are, or may be in like circumstances, and are united together under me, as their head, in one body, even as the branches of the candlestick in the tabernacle were in one stem, that they, by my ministering servants in future times, as well as in the present age, may be enlightened with the knowledge of salvation; and may *boldly* *forbid the word of life* in their holy profession, worship, discipline, soundness of faith, and moral conversation to all around them. (*Phil. ii. 16.*)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How worthy is every revelation, which Christ has made from God the Father, of serious, humble study, and religious regard! And how happy is it to understand and embrace it as a certain truth, which shall have its accomplishment in due season. The records of it lie in the word of God, and are faithfully handed down to our benefit, as delivered by his inspired servants.—All sincere ministers of the gospel, who are ordinarily most spiritual, whilst engaged in a religious observation of the Lord's day, heartily wish and pray for all the blessings of grace, with

the best of every kind of prosperity, from the Father, Son, and Spirit, to all the churches of the saints. — How august and endearing is the character of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, in his divine being and excellencies, is eternally the Living One, and is the author and finisher of all dispensations of Providence and grace; and who, in the greatness of his love, died, as man, to save his people from their sins; and is risen from the dead, to make them kings and priests to God, his Father, and as a pledge of their rising to eternal life after him, when they shall behold him in all his glory. But, alas! for sinners, that reject him, With what terror will they see him at his second coming! They will lament and wail for all their neglects of him, and for all that they have done against him. In the mean while, the church of Christ must expect to meet with various troubles, as their common lot, for the trial of their faith and patience: But O what rich encouragement have they to bear them with calm submission and composure, when they think of the magnificent representation, which Christ made of himself to his servant John, as a divine person, as omniscient and almighty, as walking in his churches to take care of the faithful among them, as enlightening and assisting their pastors, and as fighting against his and their enemies with the sword of his mouth, till he shall utterly destroy them! And what a comfort is it to true believers to be assured, that he who died to redeem them to God by his blood, is now alive, and lives eternally, with all power in his hands, to apply the fruits of his redemption, and to order the issues of life and death, and the invisible state, to their joy, and the confusion of the wicked and ungodly! To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

C H A P. II.

The apostle, according to Christ's command, sends epistles inscribed to the pastors of the churches in Asia, with prophetic warnings and encouragements, suitable to their then present state, (in which some things are commended, and others reprov'd) and relating to what they were to expect in a way of mercy, or of judgment, according to their respective faithfulness, or not, for time to come, as particularly the church at Ephesus, 1,—7. At Smyrna, 8,—11. At Pergamos, 12,—17. And at Thyatira, 18,—29.

TEXT.

UNTO the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

PARAPHRASE.

AS the Lord Jesus ordered me to write to the seven churches of Asia about things, which are already found in them, and will soon come to pass (chap. 1. 11, 19,) and which they are most immediately concerned in, I shall begin with that, which am enjoined to direct for their use to the pastor of the church at Ephesus, * the metropolis of the consular Asia. The things contained herein are dictated by him, who appeared in vision to me, (chap. 1. 13, 16.) as holding his seven Asiatic ministers

NOTE.

* Though there were several pastors or elders of the church at Ephesus, (Acts 11. 17. see the note there, and on Phil. 1. 1.) yet this epistle, like the other six, is directed in the singular number to the angel, messenger, or pastor of the church, because their work and office was one and the same, and so they were all in-

cluded in the inscription; and, perhaps one of them was most eminent and remarkable for gifts, graces, and sentiments of the same order with the rest, and therefore the epistle was directed to him to be communicated to his associates in the pastoral office, and them all to the church.

and, by consequence, all other faithful pastors, in his right hand of power and favour, to uphold, conduct, protect, and take care of them, and to make them, by his light and influence, like shining stars in the purity of their doctrine, and holiness of their lives; and he appeared as intimately present and conversant with his seven churches of that province, as represented under the emblem of seven golden candlesticks, which being a number of *perfection*, may also be fitly applied to all Christian churches, as the objects of his special notice and regard, to observe and commune with them, to supply them with the oil of grace, and trim their lamps, that they may burn with the brighter light, and to take pleasure in what is good, and correct what is amiss in them.

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars:

2 He says particularly to you, the pastor, * inclusive of the church at *Ephesus*, I am thoroughly acquainted with, and approve of your works of righteousness, and the pains you have taken to maintain and propagate my pure gospel, and the interests of my kingdom, and your bearing all the persecutions that come upon you for my name's sake, with holy fortitude, constancy, and patient hope of deliverance in due season: And I with pleasure observe your zeal for my glory, and against sin and error, that you cannot be easy with those, nor permit them to continue in church-communion, who broach corrupt doctrines, and practise immoralities: And, to shew that your zeal is according to knowledge, you have closely enquired into the principles and manners of those who arrogantly assume to themselves the honour of an apostolic commission; and you have proved that they are not what they vainly pretend to; and have really found them to be mere impostors, that have no truth or sincerity in them.

3 And hast born, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

3 And, to your further commendation, he says, I take notice that you have bravely bore up under the opposition of false apostles, and have been patiently resigned to the will of God under all the troubles you have met with from them; and have laid yourself out with great diligence, from a principle of love to me and my cause, to stand your ground against all contradiction; and have hitherto so constantly persisted therein, as not to sink, or be discouraged, under the weight of the heaviest of your trials.

4 Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because

4 But, notwithstanding all this, he says, There is one thing much amiss in you, on account of which I have a special controversy with you, and for which I

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must

NOTE

* Christ ordered the seven epistles to the *pastors*, the churches themselves are sent to the *seven churches*; (chap. i. to be considered as concerned and included in them.) and therefore though directed to

cause, thou hast
lost thy first love.

to amend, but in
the most lamentable

and in the most
lamentable

5 Remember
therefore from

whence thou art
fallen, and repent,

and do the first
works: or else I

will come unto
thee quickly, and

will remove thy
candlestick out of

his place, except
thou repent.

6 But this thou
hast, that thou hast

the deeds of the
Nicolaitans, which

I also hate.

7 He that hath
an ear, let him

hear what the Spi-
rit saith unto the

churches. To him
that overcometh

will I give to eat
of the tree of life,

which is in the
inland of the para-
dise of God.

8 As this admonition to the churches
is added at the close of every epistle to

must sharply reprove you; because, of late, you have
grown cool and indifferent in your affection to me,
and my people and cause, to the great decay of that
servent love, which worked in you, and discovered it-
self by suitable fruits and effects, in the earliest days
of your espousals to me.

5 Reflect therefore with the utmost impartiality
on your shameful declensions and revolts from your
former love and zeal; think seriously how much of
the purity, pleasure, and life of religion you have lost
by them; and be deeply humbled and grieved for them;
and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, in return-
ing to the lively exercises of faith, love, and obedience,
which you honourably professed at your conversion:
Otherwise I will take away all your gospel-privileges,
and unchurch you, that you may no longer be like a
candlestick, to hold forth the light of truth, holiness,
and comfort: You may certainly depend upon my do-
ing this; unless it be prevented by a timely humilia-
tion, repentance, and reformation.

6 But I observe, and own for your encouragement,
that, amidst all the decays of your first love to that
which is good, you still retain a hatred to that which
is notoriously sinful, and particularly, have a high
detestation of the idolatrous and filthy tenets and
practices of the sect of the *Nicolaitans**, which are so
directly contrary to my holy nature, will, and word,
that I myself also have them in the utmost abhorrence.

7 Whoever is capable of hearing, and desirous of
knowing things of so great concernment as these, let
him seriously consider, and lay to heart, the truth
and importance of what the holy Spirit of prophecy
herein says, not only to this, † but to all the church-
es of the saints, that are, or ever may be in like
circumstances to the end of the world. Upon the
whole then, he, and he only, who, in humble depend-
ence on my grace, wars a good warfare, unto the
subduing of his corruptions, and the temptations of
Satan and his instruments, and of this evil world, and

N O T E S.

* Interpreters are much at a loss to
determine, whether the sect of *Nicolai-
tans* sprang from one *Nicolas*; and if so,
whether it were one of the first deacons,
(*Acts* vi. 5.) who bore that name, and
had apostatized, or not: But they all a-
gree that the doctrines, which these
persons taught, under a profession of
Christianity, and their practices answer-
able thereunto, were abominably vici-
ous and idolatrous.

† As this admonition to the churches
is added at the close of every epistle to

the seven churches of *Asia*, it intimates
that the things wrote therein are to be
applied to all other churches, in every
place and age, so far as their state and
condition is like that of the churches to
which either of these epistles is addressed.
But I cannot think that the different
states of succeeding churches would fall
out, just in the same order of time, as
answers to the order of these epistles.
(See the preface to the paraphrase of
this book.)

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.

to endure to the end, shall be saved. (Matth. x. 22.) I will freely grant unto him all the benefits of my purchase, in the sublime and substantial honours and delights of the heavenly state, with an irreversible confirmation in it, even unto eternal life; which may be considered, in allusion to the happiness that man in innocence would have enjoyed, and been consumed in for ever, if, after having fulfilled his course of trial, he had eat of the tree of life (Gen. ii. 9. and iii. 24.) which was in the midst of the earthly paradise of God's own appointing and forming for his abode, as he has the heavenly one to be the habitation of his saints with himself in blissful glory for ever.

8 And the second epistle, which Christ ordered me to write in his name, is directed to the pastor of the church at Smyrna, another *Asiatic* city, relating to their spiritual concerns, in which they are to be told, that the things contained therein are his own true sayings, who, according to his representation of himself, (*chap. i. 11, 17, 18.*) was before all things, and will come to judge the world at the last day; who also died for his people's sins, that he might redeem them to God by his blood, and is now risen and lives again, for evermore in a state of exaltation, to secure all their interests for time and eternity.

I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

9 I am perfectly acquainted with, and take a pleasing notice of, your works and labours of love for my name's sake; as also of your enduring severe persecutions with Christian courage and patience; and I behold with tenderness and sympathy the extreme want to which you are reduced by the violence of the times, and which you meekly submit to, as being poor in spirit, while in the opinion of the world you are poor and miserable wretches: (But you are *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him*: (James ii. 5.) And, on the contrary, I observe, with just indignation, the false, hypocritical, and blasphemous pretences of those, who call themselves *Christian-Jews*, as if they, like the ancient church of *Israel*, were the only covenant-people of God, and who maintain *Jewish* rites and ceremonies, which are abrogated under the gospel state; but they are so far from being the only, or even any true members of my church, that they belong to it merely in name and profession; and, in reality, are devoted to the service of the devil, and do his work, under his influence, in propagating iniquity and error, and in persecuting my people.

10 I, who am able and ready to support and comfort you, under all your tribulations, admonish and charge you, to be no way terrified or disheartened at the

behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

10 He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied

the worst, that you may still further suffer from these wicked men. Take notice, I now tell you before hand, to fore-arm you against them, that your great adversary, the devil, will prevail by his instruments to persecute some of you, even unto imprisonment and bonds, which I shall permit for the trial and improvement of your graces, and particularly of your faith: (1 Pet. i. 7.) And though your grievous troubles will last for a considerable time; * yet let none of these things move you: (Acts xx. 24.) but maintain your dependence upon, and fidelity to me, even unto martyrdom itself, and I will make you a rich amends for the loss of a temporal life, by crowning you with all the felicity and glory of an immortal one.

11 He who is willing to know his own state and condition, let him seriously attend to, and consider the cautions, encouragements, and promises which my Spirit has given to all churches, of like character with this. (See the note on ver. 7.) Whoever he be that obtains the victory over all his and my enemies, though he may not escape temporal death, shall feel none of the miseries of an eternal hell, which is distinction from that of the body, and as coming after it, may be called the second death, and is worth of all.

12 And the *third* epistle, which I was ordered to write in Christ's name, is directed to the pastor of the church at *Pergamos*, another city of *Asia*, in which he says, The following things are what I speak, who appeared in vision, (*chap. i. 16.*) with a sharp two-edged sword, as proceeding out of my mouth to execute vengeance, by my word and providence, upon backsliders, apostates, and all mine obstinate enemies, and to defend those that hold fast their integrity according to, and by means of my word.

13 I am a kind and careful observer of every good thing done by you, and take the more special notice of it, to your commendation, and my own glory, I perfectly know, that you are situated in the most menacing and dangerous circumstances amongst a people, and under civil governors, that are, as it were,

NOTE

* It is very uncertain to what precise period these *ten days* are to be referred; whether in the sense of a natural day, or of a day for a year; whether, with some, to the persecution under *Dioclesian*; or, with others, to that under *Trajan*; or, with others, to the *ten* heathen persecutions. But as ten is a number of multitude, and all units end in *ten*; and it is often used in Scripture indefinitely,

sometimes for many, (see *Gen. xxi. 41. 1 Sam. i. 3. Job xix. 3. and Eccles. vii. 19.*) and at others for few, (see *Gen. xxiv. 55. Lev. xxvi. 26. Amos v. 3. vi. 9.*) a certain number being put, an uncertain; I therefore incline to think, upon the whole, that *ten* is here to be taken literally, for that number either of days or years, but an indefinite number of them.

ried my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas, thy faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

the throne (*o Sgros*) on which Satan sits and rules with uncommon sway; and yet, through my superior influence, you continue steadfast in your holy profession of my name, and have not departed from, much less renounced my gospel, nor your humble dependence upon me; no, not in those days of the hottest persecution, in which my faithful servant, the well-known *Antipas*,* bravely bore his testimony to me, and my doctrine and ways with his last breath, and with the last drop of his blood, when he suffered martyrdom at your city; which is a plain proof of the powerful dominion that Satan exercises over his subjects there, in whom he works unto the producing of such cruel outrage against me and my followers.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast here them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

14 Nevertheless, there are a few very blameable things among you, which I have to complain of, and reprove you for; because there are some of your church that fall in with the corruptions of the day, through a worldly-minded and prevaricating temper, like that of *Balaam*, the insatuated prophet, who, contrary to the plain will of God, and the convictions of his own conscience, used stratagems, and instructed *Balak*, to ensnare and pervert the children of *Israel*, and draw them into the sins of idolatry, and fornication with the daughters of *Moab*. (Numb. xxv. 1, 2, and xxxi. 16.) In like manner, these temporizing Christians, contrary to my known orders, (*Acts* xv. 29.) go into the practice of feasting upon sacrifices that are offered to the honour of heathen idols, and of committing fornication, as though they were no crimes.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

15 Yea, what is still more heinous and provoking, there are some of you that openly espouse and maintain the corrupt principles of the *Nicolaitans*, which, as has been said, I have the utmost abhorrence of. (See the note on ver. 6.)

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

16 It is high time for the guilty persons among you, and for you as a church, to be heartily grieved and humbled for, and to repent of, and reform these abominable evils: In case you do not, I will soon come forth, in the way of my judgments, to punish you; and, according to the emblem of the sword of my mouth, (*chap.* i. 16.) will use my sword of war, and of justice, to cut off those bold offenders, as certainly as a plague was sent to destroy the congregation of

NOTE

As ecclesiastical history does not inform who this *Antipas* was, and he is nowhere else mentioned in Scripture, we must be contented to be ignorant of it;

but he was doubtless some eminent martyr lately put to death, and well known at *Pergamos* in those days.

of the Lord for following the counsel of *Balaam*. (Numb. xxi. 16.)

17. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

17 Whoever is desirous to know how things stand between God and his own soul, let him carefully consider these solemn warnings and kind encouragements, which the Spirit of prophecy herein speaks to all persons and churches, that are in like circumstances: (see the note on *ver. 7*.) To him, who, prizing my favour and relying on my assistance, shall gain the conquest over all the temptations of the day, in which his lot is cast, I will grant the refreshments and consolations of communion with me, who am *the true and living Bread which came down from heaven*; (John vi. 32.—51.) and will make him partaker of all the blessings of spiritual and eternal life, which consist of joys that strangers intermeddle not with, and are safely *hid*, as precious treasures, *with me in God*, (Col. iii. 3.) and were typified by the *manna*, that *Israel* lived upon in the wilderness, a pot of which was *laid up before the Lord, and hid in the ark*: (Exod. xvi. 33.) And I will publicly absolve him from the guilt of all his sins, and give him boldness, like a conqueror, in the day of judgment; * which may be illustrated by the *white stone*, that is wont to be given to such as are acquitted, in courts of judicature, from all charges brought against them; and by the *white stone*, that is given to conquerors in the *Grecian games*: And I will give him a new name of dignity and honour, even that of a Christian, and a *child of God*, and *heir of glory*, as though it were engraven on the white stone; the pleasure and happiness of which none can conceive, relish, or prize suitable to its worth and excellence, but the person himself, who is made partaker of it, and knows it as his own.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brals;

18 And the *fourth* epistle, which our blessed Lord ordered me to write, as from him, is inscribed to the pastor of the church at *Thyatira*, another city of *Asia*, saying, The things that are contained in this epistle are the words of the eternal Son of God, who is by nature God, and who, to signify his infinite wisdom and penetrating knowledge of all hearts, persons, and things, appeared as with a bright flame of fire darting from his eyes; and to signify the purity, strength, and steadiness of all the outgoings of his providence, the firm support of his people in the furnace

NOTE

* Here seems to be an allusion to the custom of those days, in which a *white stone* was given on the occasions hinted in the paraphrase. (See Dr. Hammond's note on the place.)

of affliction, and his dreadful justice in trampling upon his enemies, appeared as having feet like polished red-hot, bright, and burning metal. (*Chap. i. 14, 15.*)

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

19 I, says he, take particular notice, and highly approve of all the good things done by you, and of all the love to me, and my people and cause, which works as a powerful principle within you; and of all the services, which from that principle you have performed for the relief of my afflicted members, and for my honour and glory; and of all the faith whereby you steadfastly adhere to me and my doctrine; and of all the patience under various tribulations for my sake, which you have remarkably exercised; and of the whole of your conduct and behaviour, in whatever you have been laudably engaged: And I, with great pleasure, observe that, instead of having left your first love, like the church at *Ephesus*, (*ver. 4.*) these amiable things are on the increasing and improving hand; so as that your last works of piety, love, and obedience are more numerous, eminent, and spiritual, than when you first entered upon the profession of my name.

20 Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

20 But, though I mention these many good things for your encouragement, and the honour of my grace in you, I must, nevertheless, sharply reprove you for a few others of a contrary nature, that you may not be lifted up with pride, or think yourself perfect; and especially for one great offence, in which you are exceedingly to blame; because you too much connive at, and shew countenance to a set of wicked persons, under an infamous ring leader, who take to themselves the character of inspired teachers; but are really of the same vile spirit and temper with that infamous woman *Jezebel* * who slew the prophets of the Lord, and seduced king *Abah* to idolatry, and practised whoredom and witchcraft: (*1 Kings xvi. 31. and xviii. 4, 13. and xxi. 25. and 2 Kings ix. 22.*) And these pretenders to a spirit of prophecy are tamely permitted to broach their errors, and to corrupt and draw away my professing people to the like sins of idolatry and uncleanness, and, by all

NOTE

* I rather think that here is an allusion to the wicked practices of *Jezebel*, whose name is transferred to these seducers, because their character is like hers, though they pretended to be inspired prophets, than that any person of this name, then living, was pointed at. However, *Grotius* tells us, that some

manuscripts read *thy wife*; (*γυναικα σου*) and some have thought that this woman was the wife of the Bishop of that church, and was called *Jezebel*, because she was the author of evil things, and the wife of the chief man of the church, as the ancient *Jezebel* was of king *Abah*.

all arts of subtilty and cruelty, to seduce them into acts of fornication in a literal, as well as spiritual sense, and into eating of such meats as have been offered up, and devoted to the honour of fictitious gods and their images, both which are contrary to my orders about the purity of manners and worship. (*Acts* xv. 29.)

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

21 And though I have hitherto bore long with these *Jezebel*-like seducers, that they may have means and opportunities for conviction, repentance, and reformation of their crimes; yet they continued to be hardened and impenitent, and still persisted in their evil courses.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

22 But as certainly as the threatening, which the Lord denounced against *Jezebel*, was executed after some time, in her tremendous death; (*1 Kings* xxi. 23. and *2 Kings* ix. 36.) so, be it known to these corrupters of the Christian faith and practice, that in due season I will severely punish them, as persons, whom in my wrath I will bring to a painful, sick, and death-bed; and will inflict like dreadful calamities upon all those who suffer themselves to be seduced into the commission of the same adulterous and idolatrous iniquities with them, unless it be prevented by a timely repentance and forsaking of the evil of their doings.

23 And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

23 And as the sons of that wicked king *Abah* were slain, according to the Lord's threatening to bring evil upon his house, for the iniquities which he was drawn into by *Jezebel's* enticements; (*1 Kings* xxi. 29. and *2 Kings* x. 6, 7, 10, 11.) so surely will I bring utter destruction upon the disciples and followers of these depravers of the Christian doctrine and manners, as well as upon themselves; and will do it in such exemplary executions, as shall convince all the churches, which know or hear of it, that I am indeed a *divine person*, whose prerogative it is to look into the secret thoughts of all men's hearts, (*Acts* i. 24. compared with *1 Kings* viii. 39.) and search out all the hypocrisy that lurks in their inmost parts, in their principles, motives, and ends: And I will deal impartially with every one of you, who make a profession of my name, as well as with all others, according to the nature and degree of your doings, whether they be good or bad.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in *Thyatira*, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths

24 But I assure you for the encouragement of the faithful among you, and of all others in *Thyatira*, though not actually members of your church, even every one that has not fallen in with, but heartily opposed and rejected the above-mentioned pernicious doctrine; and has not consented to, or approved, much

depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

less given into the practice, of the diabolical delusions, which these impostors propagate, with the deepest intrigue and subtilty under Satan's influence; and which they boast of as the products of profound knowledge and wisdom, while they are indeed mysteries of iniquity; I say to you, who are my faithful servants, that I will put no further injunctions or restraints upon you, than still to keep clear of these abominations; nor the burden of any more mysteries, laws, or ceremonies, than are already established in my word.

25 But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

25 I only insist upon it, that ye still persevere in, and stedfastly maintain your faith, love, and obedience, together with the purity of the doctrines and precepts, which ye have already received from me, and not count them grievous, till I shall come the second time to your salvation.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

26 And whoever he be that, on these encouragements, stands his ground against, and comes off victorious, over all temptations to the contrary, and perseveres in the faith and holiness of the gospel to the end of his warfare, I will make him a sharer in my conquests, and he shall have dominion over all the wicked of the nations *in the morning* of the resurrection. (Pf. xlix. 14.)

27 (And he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers) even as I received of my Father.

27 And as in my office-capacity, in which I am constituted King of the church, I have received a grant, with full power and authority from my heavenly Father, to have the *heathen for mine inheritance*, and to *break* my obstinate enemies among them, as with a rod of iron, and dash them to pieces as a potter's vessel; (Pf. ii. 6, 8, 9.) so I will give power to every subject of my kingdom, as acting under me, and by my assistance and authority, to prevail against them to their utter confusion. (Pf. xlix. 14.)

28 And I will give him the morning star.

28 And I will give him all the light and grace, comforts and enjoyments, that are to be found in me, who am, for excellence and delight, *the bright and morning Star*, (chap. xxii. 16.) and the Sun of Righteousness, who hath arose with healing in my wings; (Malac. iv. 2.) and he, enlightened with my glory, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. (Dan. xii. 3.)

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

29 Let every one that is desirous to know his sin and danger, and the ground of his hope, carefully attend unto, and reflect upon what the Spirit of prophecy says, in a way of promise, as well as of threatening, not only to this church, but to all the churches of this day, and to the end of the world, whose

case is, or ever may be like theirs. (See the note on ver. 7.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How imperfect as to purity and prosperity are the churches of Christ on earth! Though there are many excellent things found in them, there are others to be blamed, as in all these churches, except that of *Smyrna*, which was infested with satanical enemies, and, doubtless, had its sins of infirmities, though the love of Christ cast a mantle over them. How critical, penetrating, and truly divine, is the knowledge that Christ has of all his churches! His eyes are like a flame of fire, and he searches the secrets of all their hearts. How kind and condescending is the notice he takes of all their graces, services, and sufferings for his sake! of their hating what he hates; of their opposition to sin and error; and of every good thing that is found in them! He admonishes them not to be afraid of the worst, and to hold fast what they have of the best, that belongs to their profession of his name. He dwells in the midst of them, and holds their ministers, as stars in his right hand: He is the beginner and perfecter of all that concerns them; and as he died, so he ever lives for them. How compassionately does he remind them of their falls, and of the declensions of their first love and zeal, and call them to repentance and reformation! But how awful are his threatnings, in case of their persisting in any corrupt principles or practices, relating to doctrine, worship, or manners, like idolatry and fornication! He will surely ere long fight against them, as with the sword of his mouth, and unchurch them. And, alas! how tremendous will the executions of his wrath be upon impostors and hypocritical professors, and upon all his malicious and obstinate enemies! Whatever their boasts of deep understanding be, they act under the powerful and crafty influence of the devil, and do his work, in seducing the unwary, and in persecuting the faithful servants of Christ. He, whose feet are like burning and shining brass, will trample them in his righteous anger, till he bring them and their adherents to utter destruction. But O how encouraging and animating are his promises to his people that war a good warfare, in his name and strength, against all his and their spiritual enemies, unto victory over them! He will give them all refreshments and delights, in partaking of his fruits, as the hidden manna, and tree of life in the heavenly paradise; will secure them from all the miseries of the second death; will put a crown of immortal glory on their heads; and will give them the noblest pleasure, which they themselves only can be conscious of, as being like the new name, and white stone, which no man knows but he that has it; and which, at length, shall shine in all the lustre derived from him, who is the bright and Morning Star. May every one, that is concerned about his own salvation, seriously consider all these awful and comfortable things, with a reference to himself, as far as they are applicable to his own case, that he may not be confounded; but may have boldness in the day of judgment, when Christ will render to every one according to the kind and degree of his works.

C H A P. III.

Here follow three other epistles, containing warnings and threatenings, exhortations, encouragements, and promises, suitable to the state of the church at *Sardis*, 1,—6. at *Philadelphia*, 7,—13. and at *Laodicea*, 14,—22.

TEXT.

AND unto the angel of the church in *Sardis*, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God,

PARAPHRASE.

THE fifth epistle, which Christ ordered me to write in his name, is directed to the pastor of the church at *Sardis*, another city of *Asia*, for their use. The things contained herein are the immediate dictates of that divine person, who, as Mediator, has

God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

an all-fulness of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, with authority to distribute them in their utmost perfection and variety, (*chap. i. 4.* see the paraphrase there) and who holds his ministering servants like stars in his right hand, under his direction, disposal, care, and government: (*chap. i. 16.*) He says to you in particular, which is likewise applicable to all others of your state and character, I perfectly see through all the specious appearances of your external behaviour and forms of religion, as though you were alive to God and spiritual things, which gives you a reputation for saints among men; and, at the same time, I know that too many of you are still dead in trespasses and sins; * and that others of you are grown very dead, dull, and lifeless in the frame of your hearts, and manner of performing religious duties, especially when you are alone, and no eye of man is upon you.

1 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

2 Take heed of such a stupid temper: Watch carefully against it, and make use of all means of grace, in humble dependence on me, who have the seven spirits, (*ver. 1.*) to render them effectual, that you may derive light and influence from me for adding strength and vigour to the small remains of those good things, that are in some of you; but are so weak and languishing, as to be on the very point of expiring, unless revived by fresh recruits: For, by the search which I have made into your hearts and ways, I find such woful defects in your performances, as render them unfit to be acceptable in the sight of God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

3 As ever therefore you would make a right judgment of your state, call to mind, and seriously reflect upon the doctrine of my gospel, and the manner in which you at first received it, and heard the preaching of it; whether it were in faith and love, whereby it was rooted in your hearts, or were only with some sudden impression and flights of affection, which soon wore off again: And so far as it was according to the truth of the gospel, and was entertained with a sincere faith, do not give it up, but keep it with the utmost care in your religious regard and conformity to it; but so far as it was only in a notional and superficial manner, or as you have lost much of the life and

N O T E.

* It appears from *ver. 4.* that there were some sincere and eminent believers in this church, though the greater part of them were not what they appeared to be; but were either inwardly decaying, as to vital religion; or utterly destitute

of the grace of God, while having a form of godliness, they denied the power of it, like those whom the apostle speaks of, *2 Tim. iii. 5.* The paraphrase points to persons of both these characters.

and power with which you at first received it, be deeply humbled before God in penitential reflections upon it, and rest not satisfied till those defects be rectified: For if you continue careless and unconcerned about these things, which so nearly affect your salvation, and do not awake out of your lethargic temper to watch against it, I will certainly break in upon you with my terrors, in the way of my judgments, as suddenly and unexpectedly, and with as much surprise to your loss and damage, as a thief doth into a house, at a time when the master least of all thinks of it. (*Matth. xxiv. 42, 44. and 1 Thess. v. 2, 3.*)

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments: and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

4 There are indeed a few persons of eminence, which are known to me as by name, even in the church at *Sardis*, (corrupt and degenerate as it is) who have not contracted the defilements of error and immorality, that have spread all around them, but have maintained their integrity, as found in the faith, and holy in their lives: And be it known to them for their comfort, that they shall still be kept close to me, and live in holy and delightful communion with me, * and shall be advanced to the highest honours: For they are graciously accepted, as worthy through my righteousness, and are fit and meet by the sanctifying influences of my Spirit, (*Col. i. 12.*) to be admitted to all the privileges and favours, that I will confer upon them, even unto eternal life.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

5 Whoever he be that overcomes all temptations, especially in a dissolute and apostatizing age like this, shall shine in splendid robes of righteousness, light, and glory, that are *washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb*; (*chap. vii. 14.*) and I will be so far from striking him out (according to what he may sometimes fear) from the register of eternal life, in which his name is, as it were enrolled as a citizen, and heir of heaven, among the chosen of God before all worlds, that I will publicly own him for mine, whom the Father has given me, and I have redeemed by my own blood, and who has, under the influence of my grace, bravely confessed me before men, in the worst of times; and I will shew my approbation of him in the presence of my heavenly Father and of his holy angels, when I shall come in all my glory to the judgment of the great day. (*Matth. x. 32. and Luke xii. 8.*)

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear

6 He that is desirous to know the state of his own soul before God, let him impartially consider, and compare

N O T E.

* *White* may be an allusion to the *white robes* which the priests used to wear, in token of their acceptance and sanctity, when they ministered before the Lord;

or to the white robes of princes and conquerors, in token of their high honour and joyful triumph.

hour what the Spirit
saith unto the
churches.

And to the
angel of the church
at Philadelphia,

write, These things
saith he that is holy,
he that hath the
key of David, he
that openeth, and
no man shutteth;
and shutteth, and
no man openeth:

pare himself with what the holy Spirit of prophecy
herein speaks to all the churches, which are, or ever
may be, in circumstances like this of *Sardis*, (see the
note on chap. i. 9.) that he may see what part of it be-
longs, peculiarly to himself, and be suitably affected
with it.

7 And the *sixth* epistle which Christ commanded
me to write, as from him, is inscribed to the pastor
of the church at *Philadelphia* another *Asiatic* city,
for their immediate use, and for the instruction of all
others, whose case may be like theirs, He, who says
the things contained herein, is essentially and infinitely
holy in his divine nature, unspottedly holy in his
human nature, communicatively holy in his office,
and perfectly holy in all his dispensations; and is
invariably truth in himself, infallibly true in his de-
clarations, threatnings, and promises, and is the truth
or substance of all types and prophecies relating to
him; who also has the government of the church, and
the world upon his shoulders, as the Son of *David*,
who succeeds, in a spiritual sense, to the throne and
dominion of his house and kingdom, (*Isa.* xxii. 22.)
and has the power of life and death, and of heaven
and hell, the doors of which he authoritatively and
effectually opens; and when he does so, (*vidus*) no crea-
ture in heaven, earth, or hell, can possibly shut them;
and when he shuts them against those that would be
glad to go to heaven, or shuts them upon those that
are forced to go to hell, none can open them either
to let them into heaven, or to deliver them out of
hell.

I know thy
works; behold, I
have set before
thee an open door,
and no man can
shut it: for thou
hast a little
strength, and hast
kept my word, and
hast not denied my
name.

Behold, I will
make them of the
syna-

gones of the
churches.

And to the
angel of the church
at Philadelphia,

write, These things
saith he that is holy,
he that hath the
key of David, he
that openeth, and
no man shutteth;
and shutteth, and
no man openeth:

Behold, I will
make them of the
syna-

8 I am perfectly apprised, and approve of the true
nature, tendency, and design, and of the principles and
manner of your religious services. Behold, with hum-
ble admiration and praise, I have opened to you a door
of opportunity for my word to have free course and
be glorified; (*2 Thess.* iii. 1.) and none of its ene-
mies, (*vidus*) whether men or devils, shall be permit-
ted to have power to defeat it; because, though you
are not so eminent for light, grace, and holiness, nor
so proficient therein answerable to your advantages,
as some other first-rate Christians are; yet I kindly
observe, that you have some small degree of these ex-
cellent attainments, in sincerity and truth; and have
faithfully maintained the doctrines of my gospel, to-
gether with my institutions and commands; and have
not renounced your holy profession of my name, as
your only Lord and Saviour, notwithstanding all the
temptations you have been under so to do.

9 Take notice farther, for your comfort and en-
couragement, that I will give you victory over them;
who

synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

who serve Satan's interests as a company of his devoted servants, that live and act under his influence, and at the same time profess themselves to be *Jewish Christians*, but are evidently proved by their principles and practices, to be false pretenders to that character: Observe, I say, that I will constrain them to come before you with confessions of their errors, and to sit down at your feet, like humble disciples, to receive your instructions, and prostrate themselves in your presence, though not with religious homage of you, yet to pay it to me, as your Lord and Saviour; and they shall be forced to acknowledge, that I have a peculiar favour for you, as the objects of my special love.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

10 Since, in obedience to my command, you have hitherto patiently endured persecutions for my sake, and in conformity to my patience in sufferings, and have preserved your integrity in faithfully adhering to the pure doctrine of the gospel, which is continued, in my great long-suffering and patience, to a sinful world, and teaches patience under all tribulations, I assure you, for your further encouragement, that I also, on my part, will certainly preserve you from apostasy in the still more trying days of yet sorer troubles and afflictions, which, by divine permission, will come, not upon you only, but upon all the professors of my name throughout the *Roman* empire, * for their trial who dwell therein, that the approved may be made manifest, and openly distinguished from others who will turn apostates.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

11 To support you under these melancholy prospects, behold, with attention, admiration, and joy, I shall not be long before I will come, like one in battle, to deliver my church and people from all their enemies. In the faith and hope of this, and in an humble dependence on my promised grace to keep you in the hour of temptation, (*ver. 10.*) hold fast with the utmost care and constancy, zeal and holy resolution, the doctrine you have received, the work of God wrought in you, and done by you, and your faithful profession of my name, that none (*wdic*) through subtilty or violence, may ever pervert you, and so rob you of this honour, much less of the crown of life, which I have promised to them who are faithful unto death; (*chap. ii. 10.*) and that none may outshine you in any thing truly excellent.

12 Whosoever

N O T E.

* The *Roman* empire was often called the world, because it extended to the greatest part of the known world; and the persecution here foretold is probably thought to point at that under the em-

peror *Trajan*, which was more fierce and universal, than those which the Christians endured under *Nero* or *Dionysian*.

11 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

12 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

13 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

14 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

12 Whosoever he be that overcomes all temptations, I, as his head and Saviour, will fix him immovably, like a pillar, in the church of my covenant-God and Father, triumphant for ever in heaven; and he, like the pillars, called *Jachin* and *Boaz*, in *Solomon's* temple that were consecrated to God, (*1 Kings vii. 15, 21.*) shall never depart, or be removed from thence: And, to honour him with the highest dignity, I will inscribe upon him the name of a son of my covenant-God; and of a citizen of that blessed state, which he is the author of, and fills with his light and glory, even the *New Jerusalem*, which is so called in distinction from, and preference to the literal *Jerusalem* in the land of *Judea*; and which is of heavenly original, and shall be perfected in the beatific presence of my covenant-God. And I will inscribe my own name; which puts new honour upon him as a *Christian*, whom I have dignified with the adoption of sons, and made victorious under my banner.

13 He that is inclined to hear these rich encouragements to perseverance in faith and holiness, let him attentively consider what the Spirit of prophecy says, not only to this, but to all churches, whose characters answer to that at *Philadelphia*. (See the note on chap. ii. 7.)

14 And the *seventh* and *last* epistle, which I am commanded to write in Christ's name, is directed to the pastor of the church at *Laodicea*, another city of *Asia*, and is most immediately designed for their use, but not without an eye to other churches in their circumstances: The things contained herein are what he says, whose name is emphatically *the Amen*, as he is the faithful witness, (*chap. i. 5.*) and is truth itself, and infallibly true in the testimony he bears concerning all things whatsoever, and particularly those which are contained in the prophecies of this book; and he is able to perform them, as he is the Author, Prince, and Ruler of all the creatures in heaven, and on earth, that God has made by him. (*Heb. i. 2.*)

15 I, says he, am intimately acquainted with the nature and quality, principles, motives, and ends of all that you do in religion; whatever your own or others thoughts be about you, I know that you are neither absolutely unconcerned about it, on one hand, nor fervent in Spirit serving the Lord, on the other. I would rather that you should cast off a profession of my name, than disgrace it by being formal and hypocritical in it; or, which is best of all, that you were sincerely zealous in a behaviour correspondent to it.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth:

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

16 But as you are very cool, careless, and indifferent about things of a spiritual, heavenly, and holy nature, and are neither professed neglecters of them, nor heartily affected toward them, the time is coming when, if you persist in this disagreeable indolence, I will cast you off with abhorrence, as a man nauseated and vomits up lukewarm water that offends his stomach. But, in order to your recovery and finding mercy, attend to the following counsel.

17 Because you conceitedly and vainly delude yourself, saying, I am rich in spiritual gifts and graces, and have an abundance of all good things pertaining to life and godliness, and am in nothing defective; and because you are so stupidly blind to your own deplorable case, as not to understand and consider, that you really are forlorn, and miserable, and destitute of all true riches toward God, and ignorant of your danger, and of the way of deliverance, and are exposed to his just wrath and displeasure, like naked and deformed persons, that have no righteousness, either of justification or of sanctification, to cover you.

18 I, as a compassionate friend to souls in such wretched self-deceiving circumstances, advise you humbly to apply to, and deal with me, which, in the language of traffic, may be called *buying of me*, as you must part with your sins, and vain conceits of self-wisdom and righteousness, for the treasures of my merit and grace, that you may receive them at free cost, *without money and without price*; (Isa. lv. 1.) it being impossible for souls, so miserably poor, (ver. 17.) to give any valuable consideration for these excellent things, which are much more precious than the finest gold after it has been purified by the fire: Your being partakers of these is of the highest importance, that you may be rich in faith and every other grace, and in good works, and may be endowed with all spiritual and durable riches as heirs of the kingdom of heaven: And as, in a spiritual sense, you are really *naked*, (ver. 17.) I counsel you to apply to me for the bright and spotless robe of my righteousness, * which, for purity and splendor, may be compared to *white raiment*, that you may be completely covered and beautifully adorned with

N O T E.

* As gold tried in the fire is a fit metaphor, to signify the refined graces of the Spirit, which enrich the soul; (1 Pet. i. 7.) so, to keep the ideas distinct, I rather chuse to understand *white raiment* to signify the righteousness of Christ, which is unto, and upon all them (Rom. iii. 22.) than the *inherent righteousness* of sanctification, which is much the same with the graces of the Spirit, that are the *inward adornings of the heart* (1 Pet. iii. 4.)

with it, and your guilt and odiousness may not be exposed to the eye of incensed justice, unto your everlasting shame and confusion: And as you are exceeding *blind*, (ver. 17.) through pride, prejudices, and worldly affections, with respect to your spiritual concerns, your only way for a cure is to receive the knowledge of my word, under the illumination of my Spirit, which is like the most sovereign and effectual *eye-salve*, that your understanding may be enlightened, and you may be wise to salvation.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

19 While I give you this necessary, tender, and engaging advice in your deplorable circumstances, you may well conclude that your case, though dangerous, is not yet desperate, notwithstanding the solemn, close, and faithful rebukes I have given you: For whenever I see any thing amiss in the objects of my love, I warn and reprove them for their conviction, and bring them under the discipline of the rod for their instruction and reformation, that they may be partakers of my holiness. (*Heb. xii. 6,—10.*) As ever therefore you would reap the happy fruits of my rebukes and chastenings, and make a due improvement of them, you ought to be earnestly desirous of having your heart inspired with sacred love, and fervour in religion, and zeal for my glory; and to reflect with ingenuous shame and grief upon, and with full purpose of heart turn from, all your lukewarmness, and every other evil, that is so prevalent in you, and offensive to me.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

20 For your encouragement hereunto, take notice of my wonderful condescension and kindness, who, after all, still wait to be gracious, and continue standing, like an importunate lover and suitor, as it were, at the door of your heart, and knocking there by my word, providence, and Spirit, for admission into it: If any one shall attend to my repeated and endearing pleas with him, and by faith open to me, I will make entry into his soul with all my riches of righteousness, grace, and consolation; will take delight in all the good things found in him; and will entertain him with sensible manifestations and expressions of my love to him; and so will admit him to the sweetest communion, in which we shall have mutual fellowship here, and for ever hereafter, like that of the most intimate friends and affectionate relations, who cheerfully feast together, in token of their reciprocal love.

21 To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame,

21 Whoever, by receiving me into his heart, shall overcome all corruptions within, and temptations from without, I will own and honour him as a brave conqueror, and will graciously advance him to the high dignity and happiness of sitting with me in

vercame, and am
set down with my
Father in his
throne.

my throne of glory at the day of judgment, that he may concur with, and share in the benefit of, my eternal sentence upon all mankind; (see the paraphrase on 1 Cor. vi. 2.) even as I myself, in my office-capacity, have overcome the world, and all the powers of darkness; and am exalted in my human nature to the highest power and authority with my heavenly Father, at his right hand, on his throne of glory.

22 He that hath
an ear, let him
hear what the Spi-
rit saith unto the
churches.

22 He that is solicitous about salvation, and would not deceive his own soul, let him carefully attend to the solemn, awful, and threatening things, on one hand, and encouraging things, on the other, which the holy Spirit of prophecy herein speaks, not only to this, but to all the churches, according as they may be applicable to them respectively, in their several generations. (See the note on chap. ii. 7.)

RECollections.

How different is the state of churches and professing Christians on earth! Some, like that of *Philadelphia*, are sincere, faithful, and thriving; and, though but of little strength, are highly approved of Christ, and honoured with peculiar tokens of his love; whilst others, like those of *Sardis* and *Laodicea*, are not what they profess to be; and come under his severest rebukes: some among them have only a name to live, while they are dead; others are under languishings of grace, as though it were ready to die; and others are of a lukewarm temper, and yet flatter themselves as if all things were right and well, and do not perceive that they are wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But O the important and affecting difference that Christ will make between them! He, who is the author of the creation, has an all-sufficiency of the Spirit, is divinely holy and true in himself, and in the execution of his office, and has the key of government to open or shut without controul. He opens an effectual door for his word to have free course and be glorified; and takes a favourable notice of the lowest degrees of spiritual strength in true believers, and of their steadfast adherence to the truths of the gospel, with patience under all tribulations for his sake: He will bring all the emissaries of Satan into subjection to them, will keep them in every hour of temptation, that they may persevere in the faith, profession, and holiness of the gospel, and hold fast what they have attained to, that none may deprive them of the honour of their crown; and he will soon come to own them in the presence of his Father and of the holy angels, and to fix their abodes in the heavenly *Jerusalem*, as citizens that have the name of their God and Saviour upon them, a most excellent name, answerable to the eternal record of their names in the book of life, which shall never be blotted out; and they shall be deemed worthy to shine in priestly and royal robes of light and glory, and shall sit with their head and Saviour on his heavenly throne.—But how dreadful is the case of formal and hypocritical, cold and indolent professors! Christ is fully acquainted with, and resents all the secret treachery and indifference of their hearts; and, unless cured by his grace, will cut them off with abhorrence, and come upon them to their terrible surprise, like a thief in the night, before they are aware: But, in the mean while, how astonishing and endearing are his patience, condescension, and mercy, even to such as these! He calls them to serious reflection and repentance; counsels them to come by faith to him, that he may enrich them with his precious gifts and graces; may adorn them with his glorious robe of righteousness; and may bring them out of darkness into marvellous light: His very rebukes and chastisements are designed and blessed, for this purpose, to those whom he loves; and he graciously waits, in the manifestations of his word and motions of his Spirit, to gain admission into their hearts; and, to encourage their opening to him, promises that he will thereupon manifest his love to them, and hold delightful communion with them, which shall begin in this world.

world, and be perfected in heaven. May we severally consider how far, either these comfortable, or terrible things belong to us! And may the Holy Spirit, who speaks them in his word, speak them to saving purpose in our hearts!

C H A P. IV.

The apostle having finished the epistolary part of his revelation relating to the then present and near approaching state of the seven churches of Asia, proceeds to open the prophetic scene, which was represented to him in another vision, relating to the more general affairs of the church for times to come, to the end of the world: And as he introduced the former with his vision of Christ, (chap. iii.) he introduces this with his vision of God the Creator, as on his glorious throne, surrounded with a heavenly host, which he saw under the emblems of twenty four elders, and four living creatures, 1,—7. and with their and the holy angels songs which he heard, 8—11.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven, and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven; and one sat on the throne.

AFTER having been led into the foregoing vision, and received the directions, which I was ordered to send to the seven churches of Asia, I was favoured with another visionary representation of an opening into heaven, (see the note on Acts vii. 55, 56.) that I might observe what passed there. And the first voice, which was now directed to me from the Lord Jesus, as in the former vision, (chap. i. 10, 11.) was, for its solemnity, and loudness, like the sound of a trumpet, after the manner of that, which was heard at the delivering of the law on mount Sinai. This voice of Christ ordered me to draw near and come up to him, and said, I will reveal to you the operations of Providence, relating to my church and its enemies, which shall take place hereafter, in a regular succession of events, to the consummation of all things.

2 And presently thereupon I again, as before, (chap. i. 10.) fell into a holy rapture, or supernatural extacy, like those of the apostles Peter and Paul, (Acts x. 10, 11. and 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. see the note there) under the immediate illumination and conduct of the Spirit of prophecy: And as the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, saw in their visions a representation of the Lord, as sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; or saw the likeness of a throne, as a fiery flame, on which the Ancient of Days sat; (Isa. vi. 1. Ezek. x. 1. and Dan. vii. 9.) so the prophetic vision clearly exhibited to my sight a majestic, awful, and glorious throne, established and exalted in heaven; and I saw an emblem of the Creator and Governor of the world, (ver. 11.) as seated with august majesty

3 And he that sat, was to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

majesty and grandeur, not in human form, but in an illustrious symbolical appearance upon his imperial throne, *whose kingdom rules over all.* (Pl. ciii. 19.)

3 And he who appeared in this emblem, as sitting upon the throne, shined with a visible radiant lustre, like that of sparkling precious stones, such as the most brilliant of those which were in the high priest's breast-plate, (*Ex. xxviii. 17, — 20.*) and are represented as placed in the foundation of the *New Jerusalem*; (*Rev. xxi. 19, 20.*) as particularly, his glorious appearance was like the splendid transparent colour of the jasper, which, being of a glittering white, with an intermixture of beautiful colours, may be considered as a symbol of God's purity, together with various other perfections that are displayed in all his dispensations, and of his gracious regard to his people: The appearance was also like the blood-colour of the sardine stone, which may be considered as an emblem of God's justice and fiery indignation against his enemies*: And there was a further representation of a resplendent rainbow, like a glorious arch over the throne, enlivened with a most beautiful green, like that of the emerald, to be the token of God's unchangeable faithfulness to his covenant of grace and peace, according to his own declaration of his design, in giving that emblem of his mercy, not to drown all the earth any more. (*Gen. ix. 13, &c.*) The whole appearance was inexpressibly majestic, awful, grand, and glorious.

4 And round about the throne were

4 And round about this imperial throne, I saw the appearance of four and twenty lesser thrones, † on which

N O T E S.

* If any thing emblematical be intended by the colours of these stones, (as is most generally thought, and for ought I know there may) the hints given in the paraphrase appear as likely to me as any others, to answer that intension. But we may be more certain that the rainbow is a symbol of God's faithfulness in keeping covenant; because he himself said, that he set his bow in the cloud to be the token of his covenant, and of his remembering it. (*Gen. ix. 13, — 17.*) And the transcendent lustre of this bow may intimate its relation to a still more excellent covenant.

† It is exceeding difficult to assign the true reason of these elders being represented as twenty four. Among the many conjectures I have met with, or can think of, the most probable may be, either that there is an allusion to the twenty four courses of the priests, which re-

presented the church of *Israel*; or an allusion to the heads or chiefs of the twelve tribes of *Israel*, which were their representatives, (*Numb. i. 4, 5, &c.*) and the number of which may here be doubled to signify the great increase of the church, as consisting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under the gospel-state, or that the *Jews* and *Christian churches* are now united into one; or the allusion may possibly be to a perfect assembly or consistory of four and twenty elders as representatives of the people.—But whether we take either of these, or any other way of judging in so dubious a case, it seems to me that these four and twenty elders are to be considered as representatives of the whole body of the church, rather than (as some have thought) of its ministers or pastors, which I suppose are represented by the four beasts or living creatures. (*ver. 6.* see the note there.) For it does not ap-

there four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

which there sat four and twenty elders, as representatives of the whole church of the Old and New Testament. These appeared as clothed with pure and illustrious robes, becoming their dignity, as emblematical both of the spotless righteousness of justification, and of sanctification, and of their being a *royal priesthood*, (1 Pet. ii. 9.) or *kings*, as well as *priests* to their God, (Rev. i. 6. and v. 10.) that hold their dignities under him, and pay homage to him; and they accordingly appeared round his throne with crowns of life and glory, like those of the most precious massy gold, upon their heads, agreeable to Christ's promise to them that are *faithful unto death*. (Chap. ii. 10.)

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunders, and voices. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

5 And I saw and heard the most awful and terrible flashes of lightning, attended with loud cracks and rumblings of thunder, and solemn voices proceeding from the imperial throne, like what was seen and heard at the promulgation of the law on mount Sinai, in token of the presence of the Lord there, and of his dreadful wrath against the transgressors of that law: (Exod. xix. 16,—18.) And as seven lamps were continually burning before the Lord in the tabernacle, (Lev. xxiv. 2,—4.) I saw an appearance before the throne of seven lighted lamps burning in full strength and lustre, as emblems of the variety and perfection of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, which he distributes for enlightning, purifying, and warming the souls of his ministers and churches, by *dividing to every one severally as he will*. (1 Cor. xii. 11. see the paraphrase on chap. i. 4.)

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

6 And before the throne, answerable to the laver or great vessel of brass in the tabernacle and temple, which for its largeness was called the *molten sea*, (Ex. xxx. 18, 19. and 1 Kings vii. 23.) for the priests to wash in, when they went into the sanctuary of the Lord, I saw a bright and shining sea of glass, pure and spotless, as clear as crystal; which may be considered as a fit emblem of the *blood of Christ, which cleanses*

N O T E

very probable, that the representatives of the whole body of the church should be only four, while those of the ministers are four and twenty. And these elders being represented as sitting on thrones, (*θρόνους*) as the word rendered *seats* properly signifies, and their appearing with crowns on their heads, (Rev. 4.) is agreeable to the common character of true believers, who are spoken of in scripture, and particularly in this prophetic book, (chap. i. 6. and ii. 6. and iii. 21.) as *kings*, and as sitting

on thrones, and crowned as conquerors; and they are called *ancients* or *elders*, (Ila. xxiv. 23.) And, possibly, there may be some allusion to the Roman emperor, who sat as sovereign upon the imperial throne, and had kings of several provinces under him, who derived all their honours from him in a dependence on him, as in an infinitely higher sense the church does theirs, in an entire dependence upon the great God, who is the absolute and supreme Lord over all.

cleanses from all sin, and in which all true worshippers must be washed from their iniquities. And near the imperial throne, and in the midst of its circuit, as surrounded with the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, (ver. 4.) * I beheld the form of four living creatures, as representatives of the ministers of the gospel, and placed between God and them; and to intimate their being sufficiently qualified,

NOTE

* The four living creatures, as the word (*Enx*) signifies, ought to be so rendered, as in *Ezek.* i. 5. rather than *beasts*, which cannot agree to the third and fourth of them, one of which had a face as a man, and the other was like a flying eagle. (ver. 7.) The learned Mr. Joseph Mede, Mr. Whiston, and Sir Isaac Newton, with others, suppose that these four living creatures are a representation of the whole body of the church, or of private Christians, in allusion to the whole army or body of the Israelites encamping with their standards, that bore the figures of a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle about the tabernacle in the wilderness. But Mr. Lowman has well observed that, as there is no hint in Scripture, or any ancient writers, of such standards in the camp of Israel; so there is no evidence of it to be depended upon from later Jewish writings; and that it is very unlikely that Moses should make any such images, lest Israel should be tempted to idolatry, for which they had so lately suffered, and to which they were so very prone. (Vid. also to the same purpose, *Witt. Egyptiaca*, pag. 162, 163.) He therefore supposes, with some others, that the allusion is more probably to the Seraphim and Cherubim in Isaiah's and Ezekiel's visions, *Isa.* vi. 1, 2. and *Ezek.* chap. x.; and that these four living creatures were representatives of the holy angels. (See his note on this verse.)—But it may be matter of some doubt, whether the Seraphim and Cherubim, which were emblems of some intelligent agents, were representatives of angels; or, on supposition of their being so, whether it were any further, than as angels are emblematical of ministers, or of some eminent instruments of Providence. For, in the prophetic visions of this book, angels are spoken of as pouring out the seven vials of judgments, which were to be executed by men. However, such things are said of these four living creatures, as forbid my understanding them to be the representa-

tives of the holy angels: For both they and the twenty-four elders are brought in as falling down before the Lamb with golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints; and as joining with the elders, who led their worship in a song of praise to him that sat upon the throne; (ver. 9, 10) and to the Lamb, saying, Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth, (chap. v. 8, 10.) which surely the angels cannot say, concerning themselves. And then, in the very next verses, 11, 12, and chap. vii. 11, 12. the angels are distinguished from the living creatures and the elders, and are spoken of as joining with them in other songs of praise, to God and the Lamb, for things in which they were all one way or other concerned. And therefore, even admitting that here is an allusion to Isaiah's and Ezekiel's Seraphim and Cherubim, (though it be, with some difference, as every one of the Cherubim had four faces) I nevertheless rather incline, with other expositors, to understand the four living creatures, as representatives of the ministers of the gospel, who are sent to preach it in the four corners of the earth, in distinction from the body of the church, or private Christians, which seem to be represented by the four and twenty elders: (see the note on ver. 4.) For if the Cherubim were representatives of angels in some view of them; yet the ministers or pastors of churches had been called angels, *Rev.* i. 20. and chap. ii. iii.; and, as far as I find, all that is said in this book of prophecy, about the four living creatures, is fairly applicable to ministers: And this naturally accounts for the honour of their being here represented as nearer the throne than the twenty-four elders; since they, by their office, stand between God and the people in their holy ministrations.

ed, though few in number, for the discharge of their office, they were represented as having abundance of eyes, some in their fore-part, looking toward the throne, to receive and observe divine orders and influences from thence; and others in their hinder part, looking with tender and watchful care over the state and circumstances of the church, to feed them with knowledge and understanding, as pastors after God's own heart. (Jer. iii. 15.)

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

7 And the first of these living creatures, which I saw, was represented with a face like a lion, to signify undaunted boldness and courage; and the second living creature's face was like that of a calf or ox, (Ezek. i. 10.) to signify patience and fitness for labour in the work of the Lord; and the third living creature appeared with a face of human form, to signify wisdom, prudence, and compassion; and the fourth living creature had an appearance like the face of an eagle, which has a piercing eye, soars aloft, and is swift in flight, to signify penetration of mind into the great mysteries of the gospel, and sublime sentiments and devotion, together with eminent zeal, activity, and vigour in the service of God.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

8 And every one of these living creatures was represented, as with a furniture of six wings round about him, as the *seraphim* were in *Isaiah's* vision. (Chap. vi. 2.) The use of which is there said to be, to cover his face with two of them, in token of humility and reverence; to cover his feet with two others, in token of readiness and diligence for executing divine commissions; and with the other two he flew, to intimate his alacrity and expedition therein. And they all appeared in my vision as full of eyes, turning inward to look well to their own hearts, and attend to the illuminations of God's word and Spirit for directing them in the discharge of their office: And they, like the *seraphim* that appeared to *Isaiah*, (chap. vi. 3.) are continually employed in their holy ministrations, and in solemn adorations, saying, with the profoundest reverence and sacred wonder, in a three-fold acclamation and ascription of glory to the Father, Son, and Spirit, as three persons but one God, *Holy, holy, holy*, unspottedly, infinitely, essentially, and communicatively holy, is the Lord *Jehovah*, the Almighty God, who from everlasting to everlasting always was, is, and will be unchangeably the same; and is the Creator, Preserver, Governor, and Disposer of all things, as their first cause and ultimate end; they all being of him, through him, and to him, to whom be glory for ever, Amen. (Rom. xi. 36.)

9 And when those beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

9 And when these living creatures, the representatives of Christ's ministering servants, are thus engaged in solemn ascriptions of the highest glory, and of all divine honours and thankful acknowledgments to the great God, who, as personated by the Father, (see the note on *chap. i. 4.*) appeared in emblems of awful and illustrious majesty, as seated on the imperial throne; (*ver. 2, 3.*) and is the immortal, the only and ever living and true God;

10, 11 The four and twenty elders, the representatives of the church, joining in cheerful concert with their ministers who led the song, (*ver. 9.*) bowed down in low prostration, and with humble adoration, before their Maker, who was represented as sitting on the throne, and paid their solemn homage in worshipping him, who only has immortality, without beginning of days, or end of years; and, taking off their glorious crowns from their heads, they laid them down at the foot of the throne, as deeply sensible of their own utter unworthiness to wear such royal honours in his presence, and of their receiving and holding them merely by his free favour: In humble acknowledgment of which they said, Thou, O Lord, and thou alone, art infinitely worthy, that the most exalted ascriptions of glory, and honour, and power should be paid to thee: For thou art the great Creator of all things in heaven and earth; and it is by thy sovereign effective will and pleasure, and for thine own glory, who hast made all things for thyself, (*Prov. xvi. 4.*) that they still subsist, and are wisely disposed of, as seems good in thy sight, as well as that they at first were brought forth out of nothing into being, by the almighty word of thy sovereign command.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How delightful is the thought that a door of access is opened into heaven itself through the blood of the Redeemer, to all that are washed in it! They may enter by faith, under the Spirit's guidance and influence, into that holy place while they are here, till they shall be admitted to immediate vision hereafter. With what awful majesty and grandeur, covenant faithfulness to his people, and terror to his enemies, together with all adorable excellencies, doth the great God appear, as on his high imperial throne? And how surprising are the honours of celestial throne and crowns, which his servants and people shall be advanced to in his blissful presence, as surrounding his throne of glory, and paying their solemn homage to him with the profoundest reverence! How courageous, diligent, and laborious, prudent, vigilant, active, and cheerfully expeditious should the servants of Christ be in executing their commission, under the illumination and assistance of his Spirit, in all the variety of gifts and graces that he distributes to them! With what humble adoration, and disclaimers of merit, should believers appear before the throne of God, as casting their crowns and prostrating themselves at his feet, and ascribing the highest honour, glory, blessing, and power, to the sacred Three in One, as all things were created, and are preserved and governed by, and for him, that he may be glorified for ever and ever! And what instructive emblems are all these, of what

the ministers and churches of Christ ought to be, and do on earth, till they get to heaven, and join the general assembly and church of the first born in their eternal Hallelujahs:

C H A P. V.

In a following part of the apostle's vision, he saw in the right hand of God a book of divine decrees, which was sealed with seven seals for secrecy, and could be opened by none but Christ, 1,—5. He, appearing under the emblem of a Lamb in the midst of the throne, took the book to open it, 6, 7. Upon which the four living creatures and four and twenty elders ascribe all honour to him for undertaking this difficult work, and for redeeming them to God by his blood, and making them kings and priests to him, 8,—10. And an innumerable company of angels join with them in another song of praise to God and the Lamb, 11,—14.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

AND I further saw in my vision of God, who sat on the imperial throne, the appearance of a book or roll, which, methought, he held, as it were, in his right hand, to intimate that he would maintain and execute its contents. This book was full of written records, as I afterwards understood, relating to such important events, concerning the church and the Roman empire, and even the whole world, as God had determined to bring to pass in their order; and it was sealed with seven seals, * according to the seven principal parts contained in it, one on the outside of each to prevent its being looked into and read, till they in their order should be opened; (*Isa. xxix. 11.*) thereby intimating that God's purposes, which are as certainly recorded in his own eternal mind, as if

G g 2

they

NOTE.

* The most common books of the ancients were not like ours, that consist of many leaves bound together; but were volumes, or long pieces of parchment, that were rolled upon a round stick, in like manner as silks or stuffs often are in our days. This book of prophecy, which, according to our translation, was written within and on the backside, might, by a little alteration of the pointing be read, written within, and sealed on the backside, or without, (*ἔξωθεν*) as *Steven's* and several other copies read it. (*Vid. Grot. and Mill. in loc.*) And, according to *Grotius*, the words sealed with seven seals are a *prolepsis*; and are to be understood, not as though the apostle saw them all on the outside; but there were seven volumes wrapt up one

within another, each of which was sealed; so that, upon opening and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up, till that was opened, and so on to the seventh. — And this seems to be countenanced by the opening of the seals, one after another, in the next chapter: For in case all the seven seals had been on the outside, none of the volumes could have been read till all the seals were loosed; whereas, upon opening of every seal, the next came in course to be opened too. And *Paraur.* after others, conceived that though this book was only visional; yet it is to be understood as the emblem of this book of Revelation itself, in which Christ was pleased to reveal such things to *John*, as he afterwards committed to writing for the use of the church.

they had been wrote down in a book, are as much concealed from the knowledge of all creatures till God shall please to reveal them, as the writing of any book can be, that is closely sealed up with ever so many seals to keep it secure and secret till it is opened.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

2 And I saw a mighty angel, standing forth and crying out with a strong and earnest voice, in a way of proclamation and challenge to the whole creation, Is there any one of you all that is sufficiently qualified, or has worth and dignity enough to unfold the contents of this book, and break open the seals that are set upon it, so as to be able to understand and make known the secret purposes of God with respect to his dispensations, which are to be fulfilled in their proper time and course?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

3 And none (*νδεις*) in the whole compass of created beings, no angel in heaven, nor any creature living upon earth, nor any departed spirit of the most famous patriarchs, prophets, or apostles, whose bodies are laid under the earth, was capable, or deemed fit and worthy of the honour of penetrating into the secrets of God's counsels, or of so much as looking into them to discern any thing of them, as was signified by there being no one found among them all that could open this sealed book, or look into a single line of it; but they all stood silent and aghast, as being conscious to themselves of utter insufficiency for it.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And as I apprehended that things of vast consequence were included in this book of divine decrees, relating to future events, which I hoped and earnestly desired might by some means or other be revealed to me, I was exceedingly grieved and burst out into floods of tears; because, in answer to this universal summons, no creature could be found equal to this arduous task of discovering the secret designs of Providence, relating to the church in this world, till it shall be glorified in a better; as was signified by there being none in the whole creation that could loosen the seals, and read this emblematical book, or get the least insight into its records, that he might reveal them.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

5 And while my Spirit was thus troubled within me, one of the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, spake seasonably and comfortably to me, saying, Refrain your eyes from tears on account of there being no mere creature that can unfold these secrets; behold! there is a divine person, the only true Messiah, who, according to ancient prophecies of him, as the victorious prince of the tribe of Juda, is, for strength and eminence, like a lion, to maintain and defend his property, and tear his enemies to

pieces; (*Gen. xlix. 9, 10.*) and is not only sprung in his human nature from that tribe, as a descendent of *Jesse*, the father of *David*; but in his divine nature and office-character, is the root or source of all the happiness and glory of his kingdom, which was typified by that of *David*; (*Isa. xi. 1, 10.*) this almighty conqueror has overcome all obstructions, (*Gen. xlix. 9, 10.*) and obtained the honour, by the merit of his death, to disclose the divine counsels, the emblem of which is his opening the book, and taking off its seven seals, that the things contained therein might no longer remain absolute secrets, but be gradually made manifest in a regular succession of providences to explain them.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

6 Hereupon I looked to see this wonderful person; and, behold! to my immediate relief and transporting joy, I had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the glory of his mediatorial exaltation in human nature, at the Father's right hand, as standing near the throne, and within the circle of the four living creatures, and of the four and twenty elders, to mediate between God and them; I saw him in this posture of readiness and ability to execute all his offices of a prophet, priest, and king, which were represented under proper emblems of them severally. His *priestly* office was represented by his appearing with evident characters of *the Lamb of God*, who had been slain, as a propitiatory sacrifice to take away the sin of the world; when through *the eternal Spirit* he offered himself without spot unto God; (*John i. 29.* and *Heb. ix. 14.*) and who intercedes before the throne in virtue of his atoning blood: His *kingly* office was represented by the emblem of his having *seven horns*, a number of perfection, to denote his almighty power to execute the will of God's purpose to protect, support, and defend his church, and push down all his and their enemies: And his *prophetic* office was represented by the emblem of his having *seven eyes*, to denote that *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him*, (*Col. ii. 3.*) that he has a thorough foresight of all events, and an unmeasurable fulness of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, whose gifts and graces are under his direction, to be issued forth, in all their variety and excellence, for the benefit of his ministers and people, wherever they are scattered through the whole earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

7 And, as I further saw in my vision, the Lord Jesus came close up to the throne, and received the book out of the right hand of the Father, who sat upon it, and gave the book to him; as a signal of his delivering all power in heaven and earth to him; as his receiving it also was, of his being both able and willing

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sang a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

willing to open the meaning of the things contained therein, and to take care that they should be effectually accomplished in their proper time and order, according to the divine purpose about them.

8 And when he had taken the book into his own hand, which carried this intimation of his gracious design, the four living creatures, as representatives of his ministering servants, and the four and twenty elders, as representatives of the church, prostrated themselves with the profoundest reverence and humility before this glorious Lamb, and cheerfully united in their solemn homage of adoration and worship, prayer and praise to him, just as they had before to the Father on his imperial throne; (*chap. iv. 9, 10, 11.*) all of which, is allusion to one of the chief musical instruments that were used for thanksgiving and praise in the temple-service, appeared with harps, as emblems of the melody of their hearts, and of the most charming notes in their praising song; and each of them appeared with cups full of incense, (*ὑμνίσματα*) like the typical censers of pure gold, in which the priests were wont to burn incense before the Lord, as emblems of the prayers that are offered up by the church and its ministers, (*Pf. cxlii. 2.*) and are made acceptable to God, as presented with the sweet perfume of the merit and advocacy of their great High Priest. (*Rev. viii. 3, 4.*)

9 And they joined together, as with one heart and voice, in singing a most excellent song, which, for that reason, may very properly be called a *new song*, suited to the present joyful occasion, (*ver. 7.*) and fitted for the gospel-state, in consequence of the death of Christ, saying, Thou, O spotless Lamb of God, and thou only, art thoroughly qualified for, and deserveest the honour of knowing and opening the eternal counsels of God, as signified by thy taking the book, and breaking open its seals, that the things contained therein may not be entirely hid from all mankind; for thou wast *slain as a lamb to the slaughter*, and *madest thy soul an offering for sin*; (*Isa. liii. 7, 10.*) and hast bought us out of the bondage of the law, and of sin and Satan, to God, as his peculiar property, for his honour and service, (*Luke i. 74, 75.*) and for communion with him, and an everlasting enjoyment of him; which thou hast done by the inestimable price of thy precious blood, * where

N O T E.

* The redemption here spoken of is that which Christ made by his blood, and is said to be out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, which carries the strongest intimation, that he paid the price of redemption, not for every individual of them, but for some from among them all.

10 And hast made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

by thou hast redeemed not all of every nation, but us from among all others of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, with whom we lived, and were equally involved in guilt, and exposed to destruction.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the heads, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.

10 And thou hast advanced us to the most honourable relations to our covenant-God and Father, in making us true *Israelites*, who as *PRINCES* have power with God and prevail, (Gen. xxxii. 28.) and in consecrating us to him and his service, as *kings*, to master and subdue our own spirits, and all indwelling corruption, and overcome the world, (1 John v. 4.) in a dependence on him and devotedness to his fear; and as *priests* to have free liberty of access, through thee, by one Spirit to the Father, (Eph. ii. 18.) and to offer up such spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, as are acceptable to him on thine account: (1 Pet. ii. 5.) And we, through thy favour, merit, and influence, shall gain the victory, and triumph over all our spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, even while we are upon earth. (Rom. viii. 37.)

12 Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

11 And I looked again for still further discoveries of this glorious scene, and heard the melodious voice of a vast multitude of holy angels, which encamp round about them that fear the Lord, (Ps. xxxiv. 7.) and surrounded the imperial throne, and the living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers, who were nearest the throne, (see the note on chap. iv. 6.) and the elders the representatives of the church, who were nearer it than the angels themselves: These joined in harmonious concert with them, to express their praises, as they also were confirmed by Christ, and rejoiced in his favour to men; (see Luke ii. 13-14, Eph. iii. 10. and 1 Pet. i. 12.) their number was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands multiplied by thousands, (see Ps. lxxviii. 17. and Dan. vii. 10.) yea, an innumerable company of them, (Heb. xii. 22.)

13 And I saw every creature which dwelleth in heaven, and the elders, and the living creatures, and the angels, standing round about the throne, and singing, and praising the Lamb that was slain, saying, Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

12 Saying, with a strong, lively, and articulate voice, with cheerful hearts, and lofty notes of joy and praise, Infinitely and only worthy is this exalted Lamb of all the honours, not only of his divine person, but also of his mediatorial office, who was slain in offering up himself to God a sacrifice for sin, that the general assembly and church of the first born may be joined to the angelic quire in heaven. (Heb. xii. 23.) He, undoubtedly, deserves to receive all grateful acknowledgments, and high ascriptions of universal authority and dominion over all, and of inexhaustible riches of grace and glory, and of unsearchable wisdom and invincible strength, and of every kind of religious

ous honour, and of all divine and mediatorial glory, and of the liveliest adoring praises, which of right belong to him; who is completely qualified for discharging the high trust that the Father has committed to him.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

13 And, methought, I heard the whole creation concurring in the song; even all the angels in heaven, and all the saints on earth, and all the separate spirits of the just made perfect, whose bodies are buried in the earth, and in the bottom of the sea; yea, methought, I heard all creatures contained in them, and particularly all the sensitive creation, echoing to the Redeemer's praise for the deliverance he will bring to them *from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*, (Rom. viii. 19.—22. see the note there) saying, May all united thanksgivings, and honour, and glory, and might, and dominion be equally ascribed to God the Father, who sits on the imperial throne, and to the adorable Lamb, who is God, and *purchased the church with his own blood!* (Acts xx. 28.) May these tributes of praise be perpetuated to them jointly from henceforth to all eternity!

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

14 And the four living creatures, the representatives of the ministers of the church, who had began the chorus, (*ver.* 8.) closed it, saying, *Amen*, so it ought to be, and so according to our earnest desire it shall be; and the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the body of the church itself, readily consenting, prostrated themselves with humble reverence, and paid their religious adorations to the ever and only living and true God, inclusive of the living Redeemer, to whom they ascribed equal honours, (*ver.* 13.) and who is unchangeably *the same*, in his person and office, *yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* (Heb. xiii. 8.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a privilege and pleasure is it to be acquainted with the counsels of God for our support under every trial, till our happiness shall be perfected in eternal salvation! And what a grief to have them hid from us! But, blessed be God, that, when no creature in heaven or earth was able to reveal them, the Great Messiah of *Judah's* tribe, and the root of *David*, has interposed between him and the church, and has taken the book of divine decrees, by the Father's grant, into his hand, and has loosed the seals thereof, to lay them open, and to fulfil them in their season. He is worthy of the most grateful acknowledgments and honours on his own account, and on account of his meritorious death; whereby he, as Mediator, obtained authority for this important work. How awful and majestic is his character, as a *lion* to tear his enemies to pieces, and defend his people from their rage against them! And how endearing, as a *lamb* for meekness, that was led to the slaughter, and died a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice for them, whom he redeemed by his precious blood as a peculiar people, and has dignified with the honour of kings and priests to God, in distinction from the rest of mankind, throughout the world, of what nation, or kindred after the flesh, soever they be! O the divine adoration

adoration and worship, and songs of praise, that are and ought to be offered to him together with God the Father, by all his ministering servants, and the whole church: The innumerable company of angels delight to join with them, in ascribing all blessing, honour, glory, and power, equally to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, as the same God with him, and as sustaining their proper parts in the economy of salvation, that they may be jointly glorified for ever. May all creatures in heaven and earth concur herein, and cheerfully say, Amen:

C H A P. VI.

The apostle goes on to an account of the opening of the seals in their order, for revealing the purposes of God that are to be fulfilled by his providence in seven grand successive periods; the first of which is represented in the opening of the six first seals, and relates to the state of the church under the Heathen emperors of Rome, from the time of this prophecy to Constantine the Great, about the year of our Lord 323.—The first seal is opened, relating to the glorious success of the gospel in the first promulgation of it, 1, 2. The second, relating to a great destruction both of persecuting Jews and Romans, by their wars one with another, till about the year 138, 3, 4. The third, relating to great scarcity of provisions in the Empire, between the year 138 and 179, 5, 6. The fourth, relating to great mortality by a pestilence, between the year 211 and 241, 7, 8. The fifth, relating to the cry of the souls of martyrs under the altar, 9.—11. And the sixth, relating to the dreadful and total subversion of the Empire, as Heathen, in the reign of Constantine, about the year 323, 12,—17.

P E R I O D I.

P A R A P H R A S E.

TEXT.
AND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were, the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts, saying, Come, and see.

SEAL I.] 1 NOW to give an account in order of the several prophecies contained in the sealed book, as they gradually appeared in the opening of each part of it; upon the delivery of this book or roll into the hand of Christ, who appeared under the representation of a Lamb, I saw, in my vision, that he soon began with opening the first of the seals, to discover the prophecies contained in the part which was then unrolled; and I immediately heard an exceeding strong voice, as loud as thunder, which was distinctly pronounced by the first of the four living creatures, or representatives of the ministers of the church, who appeared like a lion; (*chap. iv. 7.*) and he summoned my attention, saying to me, Draw nigh hither, and behold what offers to view in this part of the roll, which is now unfolded.

2 And I saw, and behold, a white horse appeared, the emblem of joy and triumph, and

white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

of the purity of the gospel, and of all divine procedures: And the illustrious person, even the Lord Jesus himself, who sat upon it, like a mighty warrior riding prosperously, was figured out to my view as having a bow in his hand, like what is used in battle for shooting arrows, a fit emblem of the power of his word and Spirit, which penetrates as deep as sharp arrows into the hearts of his enemies, either to slay them before him, or to make them a willing people in the day of his power: (*Psal. xlv. 5. and cx. 3.*) And a glorious crown was set upon his head, the emblem of his royal dignity and victory, *who, for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honour.* (*Heb. ii. 9.*) And he marched forth in a triumphant manner, immediately beginning to conquer, and carrying on his conquests, till they should be completed to the joy of his people, and the confusion of his implacable enemies; * which might point to the wonderful success of the gospel, in its spreading far and wide through the *Roman* empire, unto the conversion of vast multitudes of sinners, especially from among the idolatrous *Gentiles*, and the defeating of all opposition to it, in the first age of Christianity, when its preachers went forth with strength and speed, like horses, to propagate it every where under Christ, who rode in triumph on their ministrations, as a specimen of what should be done in after ages, till the whole number of his elect shall be gathered in, and all his enemies shall be made his footstool. (*1 Cor. xv. 25. and Heb. i. 13.*)

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come, and see.

SEAL II.] 3 And when I saw in my vision that Jesus, the glorious Lamb, had opened the second seal to discover the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the second of the four living creatures, or representatives of gospel ministers, which appeared to me like an ox or calf, (*chap. iv. 7.*) calling upon me, and

NOTE

* Mr. Joseph Mead and Sir Isaac Newton, with others, suppose that the first four seals relate entirely to the judgments that were executed on the *Roman* empire; and that the prophecies concerning the affairs of the church do not come in till the fifth seal; and that Christ's riding on the white horse, conquering and to conquer, is emblematical of victories obtained to the destruction of his enemies.—But, methinks, riding on a white horse does not seem to be a proper emblem of only the same sort of terrible slaughter of Christ's enemies, as under the very next seal is represented by a rider on a red horse; and it seems some

what unaccountable, that the surprising progress of the gospel by the preaching of the apostles, which, according to Sir Isaac's scheme, was mostly after this vision, especially among the idolatrous *Gentiles*, should be taken no notice of at the beginning of a revelation, in which the church was so nearly concerned. But it was exceeding proper, and tended greatly to their comfort, to represent the judgments of God, in the opening of the three next seals, that should fall upon those who should furiously set themselves against the gospel, after he had so signally owned and blessed it.

and saying, in like manner as the first had done, Come hither, and see what presents itself in the part of the roll which is now unfolded, relating to the next succeeding event of Providence.

4 And there went out another horse that was red; and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

4 And, upon my drawing near, I saw a representation of another horse, whose colour was as red as if he had been all over stained with blood, a proper emblem of dreadful war and bloodshed: And the rider of this horse was represented, as an agent of Providence, * to spread confusion and slaughter among the persecuting inhabitants of the earth, to the destruction of their tranquillity and safety; and to do this by means of his throwing one party of them into a state of war with the other, that they might slay one another: And, as a further emblem of this righteous judgment of God upon them, a huge formidable sword was put into the hand of the warrior, who sat upon the red horse. All which may be considered as a prediction of the dreadful destruction of infidel Jews and Romans, those common enemies to Christianity, in the wars between them, especially in the reigns of Trajan and Adrian, till about the year of our Lord 138, which was a righteous judgment upon those joint persecutors.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come, and see. And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

SEAL III.] 5 And when the Lamb had loosed the third seal, and so laid open the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the third of the living creatures, or representatives of ministers, which appeared with a face like a man, (*chap. iv. 7.*) saying to me, as the two former had before, Come near, and see what is contained in this unfolded part of the roll, relating to the next remarkable event of Providence; and, looking into it, I observed the representation of another horse of a black colour, a fit emblem of mourning and affliction, by reason of great distress: Accordingly, he, who appeared as mounted upon this horse, had the figure of a pair of scales in his hand, † to weigh

H h 2

weigh

N O T E S.

* It is hard to determine, whether the rider on the red horse be meant immediately of Christ, or of such instruments as he made use of, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. (*Chap. xiv. 16.*) But, be that as it will, if this vision of the second seal was (as is most commonly thought) in the time of Domitian's persecution, about the year of our Lord 96, (*Vide Mill. proleg. p. 19.*) it may very fairly be referred to the vast numbers of both Jews and Romans that fell by the wars between them in Trajan's and Adrian's reigns, about 40 years

after the vision. (See Mr. Lowman's history of this seal.)

† Some consider the pair of balances as an emblem of plenty, and of strict and impartial justice, which was administered in the reigns of Severus, and his son Alexander. But it rather appears to me that it is here to be taken as an emblem of affliction, in a way of judgment upon the Heathen persecuting empire, according to the purport of the next foregoing and following seals, and according to the most natural construction of the emblem of a black horse; and the interpretation of

weigh the corn, that should be sold at an excessive price, as in a time of great scarcity next to a famine; (see *Lev. xxvi. 26. Lam. iv. 10. and Ezek. iv. 16.*) which may be considered as pointing to a great want of provisions; and was another judgment upon the Heathen empire for persecuting the Christians under the reigns of the two *Antonines*; between the years 138 and 179.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

6 And to explain the meaning of this symbolical representation, I heard a proclamation among the four living creatures, saying, So great will be the scarcity of bread at this time, that one small measure of wheat, no more than is sufficient for a single day's sustenance for one man, shall be sold at the extravagant price of a *Roman* penny; and three such little measures of barley, which makes the coarsest bread, shall cost the same: * And, as a further token of the scarcity of other provisions, an order was added to take heed, that no injury be done to the olive-trees and vines, lest they utterly fail of producing oil and wine for the refreshment of the rich, as bread is of the poor; and so the famine become in a manner total.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come, and see.

SEAL IV.] 7 And when the Lamb proceeded to open the *fourth* seal, and unfolded the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the *fourth* of the living creatures, or representatives of gospel ministers, which appeared with a face like an eagle's, (*chap. iv. 7.*) calling to me and saying, Come near, and see what this exhibits to your sight.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him: and power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword,

8 And having drawn near, and looked upon it in my vision, I beheld a representation of another horse, whose colour was as pale and ghastly as a dead corpse, a fit emblem of death, which ravaged in various forms through the *Roman* empire, in executions of judgments upon them that persecuted the church of Christ: Accordingly there appeared an inscription of the name of the rider of this horse, intimating that he was the king of terrors, called *Death*; and in his train there was a representation of the grave, and of the separate

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of it in the next verse seems to confirm this sense. (See *Ibid*'s history of the scarcity of provisions in the reigns of the *Antonines*, which began about the year of our Lord 138 and ended about 179.)

* A measure of wheat (*χούξ εἶνος*) is variously computed: But if *Grotius*'s account from *Herodotus*, *Hipocrates*, *Diogenes*, *Laertius*, and *Athenæus*, may be depended upon, it is no more than one man in health needs for the allowance of each day. And a penny, which

was about seven-pence half-penny of our money, was as much as a labourer could earn in a day, as appears from *Matth. xx. 2.* (Vide *Grotius* in loc.)—Several senses, very contrary to one another, have been put upon *hurt not the oil and the wine*; but that given in the paraphrase, which for ought I know, is singular, appears most agreeable to what I take to be the meaning of the former part of the verse.

sword, and with
hunger, and with
death, and with the
beasts of the earth.

parate state, (*adms*) into which the departed souls of the wicked immediately enter to be cast into hell, which may be styled *the second death*. (Chap. xx. 6, 14.) And I saw that commission was given to these formidable instruments of divine wrath, to make dreadful havock in the destruction of vast multitudes upon one fourth, or a considerable part of the *Roman* empire, that extended to the greatest extent of all the known regions of the earth; which judgments were to be executed in cutting off some by the sword of war; and others, according to God's threatnings to sinful and idolatrous nations, (*Ezek. v. 17. and xiv. 21 and xxxiii. 27.*) by a pining famine; and others by a sweeping pestilence; and others by the fury of wild beasts of the fields to devour them; so that they which escaped one, should fall by another of these four heavy calamities, and find no place of security against them. * All which may be considered as fulfilled upon the idolatrous *Heathen* persecutors of the church under several emperors, whose severities began about the year 211, and continued, with little intermission, till about the year 241.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.

SEAL V.] 9 And when the Lamb had taken off the fifth seal, to disclose the things contained in that part of the roll which was then opened, I saw in my vision an affecting representation of martyrs, that had been slain in the then present, as well as former persecutions, whose souls, surviving their dead bodies, appeared to me in allusion to temple-service, † as pro-

N O T E S.

* The emperors *Maximinus, Decius, Gallus, and Volusion, and Valerian*, were cruel persecutors of the Christians; and in their days the Empire was punished, not only with the sword and famine or scarcity, as under the two former seals, but also with the pestilence, which is signified by death, (*Jer. ix. 21.*) and was distinguished from those other judgments, as in the passages referred to in the paraphrase. And it has been observed, that war brings on scarcity; and and scarcity pestilence, for want of proper sustenance; and pestilence, by depopulating the country, leaves the few survivors an easier prey to the wild beasts; and so these judgments have a natural tendency to make way one for another, in the order in which they are here represented. And their reaching the fourth or a considerable part of the earth, is expressed in the paraphrase so indeterminate, as to leave room for applying it either to a fourth part of the subject, or

of the dominion of the *Roman* empire, which, I think, is meant by the earth or world in several parts of the New Testament, and in this prophetic book, (*chap. iii. 10.*) where the whole world, and they that dwell on the earth, are synonymous terms, as they also are *Rom. x. 18.* compared with *Matth. xxiv. 14.*; and probably the earth signifies the *Roman* empire, *ver. 4.* of this chapter.

† As the scene of this vision was in heaven, (*chap. iv. 1.*) the souls under the altar seem to be an allusion, not (as some think) to the blood of the sacrifices that was poured out at the foot of the brazen altar, which stood in a court without the temple; but to their being before the altar of incense, which was within the sanctuary; and so intimates that the blood of these martyrs was not to be considered as propitiatory sacrifices; but as offerings of a spiritual nature, like the prayers of *Israel* before the golden altar at the time of incense, that they might

prostrating themselves at the foot of the golden altar of incense within the sanctuary; a proper emblem to signify, that the offering, which they had made of themselves even unto death, for their faithful and professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, and for the noble witness they had bore to him with constancy and perseverance to the end, was highly acceptable to God, through the odour of his intercession.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge, and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

10 And, methought, they, in an humble and devotional manner, cried out, with great fervency and earnestness, O Lord, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and art faithful to thy promises to thy people, and true to thy threatnings against thine enemies, How long will it be e'er thou, in the course of thy providence, wilt glorify thy holiness and justice, and vindicate the honour of thine own name, by reckoning with, and taking suitable vengeance upon, those implacable persecuting enemies, who, through thy great patience, dwell on the earth, and have shed our blood for our stedfast adherence to thee and thy cause? When shall the time come for thy putting a stop to their rage, and bringing confusion upon their wicked designs, that they may no longer go on to murder thy saints and servants for righteousness sake.

11 And hereupon they appeared, in token of acceptance with God, as clothed with glorious shining garments, the emblems of purity, honour, and joy, even robes of righteousness, which were put upon every one of them by the free favour of God: And, in answer to their humble enquiry with respect to the destruction of persecuting enemies, and the deliverance of the church from their rage on earth, they were told that they must wait with quietness, and hope about it, a little longer, till the number of faithful martyrs should be fulfilled, by the testimony which others of their fellow-Christians and brethren were also to bear to Christ and his cause, and seal with their blood, as they themselves had done before; and then the troubles of the church from Heathen enemies should entirely cease, and issue in a state of prosperity and peace: Herein referring most immediately to the sharp, though short persecution, under Dioclesian, which was the last that should be inflicted by the Pagan empire; and should be brought to its final period, by Constantine the Great's obtaining the imperial dignity, and surmounting all opposition, in his victory over Licinius, about the year 323.

SEA4

NOTE.

might be performed by the intercession of Christ, to recommend the persons and prayers, and religious services and sufferings of his people to divine acceptance.

11 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

12 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

13 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

15 And the kings of the earth, and the

16 And the kings of the earth, and the

17 And the kings of the earth, and the

SEAL VI.] 12 Accordingly, when the Lamb had broke open the sixth seal, and exposed that part to view which was before unrolled, I looked, and beheld a representation of the most terrible and shocking confusion, as though all nature were in the strongest convulsion, just ready to be dissolved. It seemed to me, as if the whole terrestrial globe rocked and trembled, and were shaking to pieces by an universal earthquake; and as if all the brightness of the sun in the firmament were turned into the thickest darkness, and into such a doleful mourning, as uses to be expressed by one's being clothed with a garment of coarse sackcloth made of the blackest hair; and as if the moon had lost all its light, and were turned into a horrid gloom, as red as blood.

13 And, methought, I saw the stars tumble down to the earth from their places in heaven, with as much precipitancy, as blighted or immature figs are blown down from their trees to the ground, when beat upon by a violent storm of wind.

14 And, in this figurative representation, I beheld the whole face of the firmament removed out of its place, and no more expanded than if it had been rolled up together, like a huge sheet of parchment, and entirely rolled away; and all the mountains and islands of the earth appeared at the same time, as thrown down and destroyed, never to be seen any more: All which signified the absolute irrecoverable overthrow of the *Heathen* state, and power of the persecuting *Roman* empire, together with the whole frame of its ecclesiastical constitution, from the highest to the lowest degrees and orders of people in it, when *Constantine* the Great mounted the throne, destroyed the pagan temples, that were often built on mountains, abolished idolatry and idolatrous priests on the islands, as well as on the continent, and changed the whole Empire from its *Heathen* to the *Christian* form of government. This grand and surprising revolution was represented to me in a like emblematical manner, as the destruction of the enemies of the church were by the ancient prophets, under the strong and striking figures of an earthquake, of darkening the sun and moon, of the falling of the stars, and rolling the heavens together as a scroll, and removing the earth out of its place; and as the destruction of *Jerusalem* had been described by our blessed Lord. (See *Isa.* xiii. 9,—19. and xxiv. 23. and xxxiv. 4. *Ezek.* xxxii. 7, 8. *Hag.* ii. 21, 22. and *Matth.* xxiv. 29.)

15 And such was the terrible fright and consternation of all ranks and degrees of *Heathen* idolators and

the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;

and persecutors at this doleful *catastrophe*, and at the heavy punishment thereby inflicted on them, that those of the highest authority, even the emperors or chief rulers of the earth, who exercised royal dominion in the Empire; and the nobles, magistrates, and governors of provinces, and all the principal men in authority; and the richest subjects of the Empire; and the most bold and daring soldiers and commanders of armies; and men of the most undaunted courage that feared nothing before; and people of lower rank, whether servants or masters, slaves or free citizens; persons of all characters, ran about in wild despair, seeking, if possible, to find some retiring place, as they had formerly forced the Christians to do, in obscure caves of the earth, and in the clefts and holes of craggy rocks, or on the tops of mountains; and for the *loftiness* of all sorts of men was bowed down, and their *haughtiness* made low, as was prophesied of those whose idols should be abolished in the days of the Messiah's kingdom: (*Isa. ii. 17,—21.*) And this may be considered as a strong and lively prefiguration of the still more dreadful confusion and dismay that will seize all graceless sinners, of every character, at the day of the final judgment and dissolution of all things.

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

16 And, amidst all this terror and anguish, they, like the *Israelites*, when God punished them for their idolatry, (*Hos. x. 8.*) wished, and called in vain for mountains and rocks to tumble down upon their heads, and overwhelm and crush them to death, if by this means they might possibly be sheltered and hid from the presence of the incensed God, who, as sovereign of the universe, was represented as sitting upon the throne; and from the righteous vengeance of the Lord Jesus, for the furious opposition they had made to him and his cause, and for the cruelties they had exercised upon his members, whose just resentments, though a lamb for meekness, were now kindled against them, and whom they provoked to act the part of the lion of the tribe of Judah, (*chap. v. 5.*) by tearing them in pieces, when there was none to deliver them. (*Pl. l. 22.*)

17 For the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?

17 For they found, by woful experience, that the signal threatened day of Christ's terrible justice was then come in its severest executions; and therefore, under a sense of guilt, they cried out with bitter agony, horror, and despair, who of us all shall be able to escape, resist, or bear the fiery indignation, that now comes forth to devour us?

RECOLLECTIONS.

How glorious are the triumphs of the gospel, when Christ rides forth upon it, with all-conquering strength, to subdue his enemies, and make a willing people to himself! And yet how many are the trials of faith and patience, that he suffers his followers to undergo, even unto death, for their fidelity to him! But they need not be dismayed or discouraged at them; for in a little time the cry of their blood shall be heard, and God will avenge himself on their persecuting enemies.—In what a dangerous state are the opposers of Christ and his gospel! They are liable to be cut off from the earth by terrible judgments, such as war, famine, pestilence, and every kind of violent death. And ah! the consternation, horror, and dismay, that will pierce their guilty souls, when the whole frame of this world shall be dissolved, and the great day of wrath shall come! Then all ranks and orders among them, from the greatest monarch to the meanest peasant, and the most bold and daring of them all, shall tremble before the great God, and the provoked Lamb; and they would rather have rocks and mountains fall on them to crush them to death, and, if possible into an annihilation, than feel the terrors of divine vengeance, which they can neither escape, nor bear. But O the unspeakable happiness of the saints after all their troubles, which shall soon have an end! Though men may kill their bodies, they cannot kill their souls; but they shall go to God, and find acceptance with him through the blood of Jesus, and shall be clothed with illustrious robes of spotless purity, and immortal honour and delight: And when the number of holy martyrs and sufferers for Christ shall be completed, and their testimony to him be finished, they shall join the glorious multitude that are already in heaven, and be ever with the Lord.

C H A P. VII.

A pause between the two first grand periods, represents a short respite from persecution, for the comfort of the saints, from about the year 323 to 337, 1,—3. And their peace, happiness, and safety, as signified by an angel's sealing 144,000, 4,—8. A chorus of the whole church, with which the holy angels join in a song of praise on this joyful occasion, 9,—12. And one of the elders informs the apostle of the unspeakable blessedness and glory of those that suffered martyrdom for Christ, 13,—17.

TEXT.

AND after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

PARAPHRASE.

AND after the view I was favoured with of the things discovered by the opening of the first six seals, relating to the destruction of the Heathen idolatrous Roman power, I had another vision, in which I beheld four angels, or messengers, that were to be the instruments of Providence for executing judgments in due season on the Roman empire, after it had publicly embraced Christianity: They appeared to me as standing at the utmost bounds of the northern, eastern, western, and southern parts of the earth, and as detaining the four winds which blow from those cardinal points, * that none of them, as yet, might rise and spread

NOTE.

* It is most commonly agreed, that *and trees* are variously interpreted with the winds here mentioned are emblems great uncertainty, according to different conjectures of expositors. The general sense

spread malignant influence upon the inhabitants of the continent, or of the islands in the sea, or upon the fruits of the ground: Thereby intimating, that as the judgments of God are compared to *winds*, (Jer. xlix. 36, 37. and li. 1, 2.) and to pernicious doctrines, (Eph. iv. 14. and Jude ver. 12.) so their being held back was an emblem to signify, that, for the present, there should be a calm and peaceful state of the Church and Empire, free from commotions and disturbances, by any gross errors on one hand, or oppressions and desolating judgments on the other: Which may be considered as taking place, for a few years, after Christianity was established by *Constantine* the Great, and became the religion of the *Roman* empire, which continued in a peaceful state during his life, from about the year 323 to the year 337.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the

2, 3 And, to shew that this restraint was to be only for a little while, I beheld another angel, or divine messenger, of superior authority, coming up from the eastern quarter with an emblem of the highest honour, and power, signified by his having the seal of the only living and true God; * and he cried with sovereign authority, great earnestness, and compassion for his people, and with a strong voice, loud enough to be heard at the most distant parts of the earth by the other four angels, that had received a commission to execute judgment in God's time and way, according to his will, upon all ranks and degrees of people; saying

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sense is more easily apprehended, while they are considered as things that are exposed to injuries by tempestuous winds; and I know not, whether any thing more particular be *certainly* intended; but, if it be, what is suggested in the paraphrase bids as fair for it, in my thoughts, as any other conjecture.

* This other angel seems to have been *Christ* himself, who is spoken of as a *mighty angel*, (chap. x. 1.) and the *angel of God's presence*, (Isa. lxiii. 9.) and is called, by way of eminence, *his angel that bears his name*, and the *angel or messenger of the covenant*; (Exod. xxiii. 20.—23. and Malac. iii. 1.) and who rose as the *Sun of Righteousness*, and the *day-spring from on high*, (Malac. iv. 2. and Luke i. 78.) and came from *Judea*, the eastern part of the *Roman* empire. He appeared with an eminent emblem of honour, as having the *seal of the living God* upon himself, with power to seal his servants; and spoke with the authority of a God in commanding the other four angels to refrain from executions of judg-

ments, till he had done this important work in favour of his church. Now, to whom can all this be so properly applied, as to *Christ* himself? He is the head and Lord of all the angels, and is in his office-capacity sealed by God the Father; (John vi. 27.) and he only, together with the Father and Spirit, *knows his sheep*, or *those that are his*; (John x. 14. and 2 Tim. ii. 19.) and so he only, exclusive of all creatures, had a certain knowledge of them, and sufficient power and authority to seal them with his Holy Spirit, whereby he marks, distinguishes, and secures them unto the day of redemption. (Eph. iv. 30.) And as in sealing those that belong to him, he acts in the character of *Mediator*, and makes use of gospel ministers, in that work, he is fitly represented as an angel, and they may be supposed to be included, in a subservient way of operation, with himself, when he said, *Hurt not the earth, &c. till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads* (ver. 3.)

the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

saying to them, Stay your hands for a season, and execute no judgments on any part of the Empire, till we, who are authorised, in our different order, to take care of the saints and servants of our covenant-God, have put a seal upon them for distinguishing, preserving, and appropriating them, as a peculiar people to him, and for making them as evidently known to be so, as if they were visibly marked on their foreheads, in token of his owning and sparing them, as the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on the door posts of the children of *Israel*, and the mark ordered to be set on the foreheads of those that cried and sighed for the abominations in the midst of *Jerusalem*, were the tokens, by which they were to be saved from the judgments that were to fall upon others. (*Exod. xii. 12, 13, 23. and Ezek. ix. 4,—6.*) By this was intimated that the terrible desolations and pestilential heresies, which were to be denounced by the *seven trumpets* under the *seventh seal*, as to be executed upon the Romish antichristian empire, should be deferred for a while, till in that interim many converts should be brought to serve the Lord in spirit and truth, and to make a free and open profession of his name, and should be taken into his special favour and protection.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand, of all the tribes of the children of *Israel*.

4 And hereupon, methought, I heard a declaration of the number, that were thus distinguishingly marked and appropriated to the Lord; and they, who were thus evidently set apart for him, and perfectly known to him, were figuratively expressed by one hundred and forty-four thousand, a large determinate put for an indeterminate number, as multiplied by twelve, a square root, and then by a thousand, to be an emblem of all the chosen and called of God in that age, who were reserved to him, and built upon Christ, the foundation which was laid in the doctrine of the twelve apostles, and who should make a brave and bold profession of the pure gospel in the Christian church, consisting of *Gentile* as well as *Jewish* believers, which were his truly spiritual *Israel*, and spoken of as such, in allusion to the twelve faithful tribes that sprang from *Jacob*, who, on his having power with God, was called *Israel*; (*Gen. xxxii. 28.*) and whose posterity were the true and visible church, according to God's covenant with *Abraham*. (*Gen. xvii. 7,—9.*)

5 Of the tribe of *Judah* were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of *Reuben* were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of

5, 6, 7, 8 Of these there were sealed twelve thousand, as if so many were reckoned to the tribe of *Judah*, from which our Lord in his human nature sprang, and which therefore has the honour of being first referred to. In like manner twelve thousand were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Reuben*,

Jacob's

of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasse were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which

Jacob's eldest son, though by his iniquity he lost the honour and privilege of the first-born, which were transferred to Judah. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Gad. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Aser. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Naphthali. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Manasse. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Simeon. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Levi. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Issachar. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Zebulon. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Joseph, one of the darling sons of Jacob. And twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of Benjamin, his other chief favourite son. All these make up together one hundred and forty four thousand; in which account of them, the tribes of Dan and Ephraim are passed by, as having been ring leaders of idolatry, (*Judg. xviii. 30, 31. 1 Kings xii. 28,—30. and Hos. iv. 17.*) and so not fit to bear a part in the emblems of the pure church of Christ: But, in their stead, the reckoning refers to the tribe of Levi, though they had no inheritance with the rest in the land of Israel; (*Numb. xviii. 24. and Josh. xiii. 33.*) and to the tribe of Joseph, the eldest of Jacob's most beloved sons, to whose two sons Jacob gave such a blessing as might constitute them heads of distinct tribes, (*Gen. xlviii. 14,—20.*)

9 After this vision of the peaceful and prosperous state of those on earth, that were faithful to Christ, and marked out as a peculiar people, * I had another

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* The former vision of the 144000 that were sealed, I apprehend to be a representation of the state of the true church on earth, for a little interval then coming on, as consisting not merely of the natural seed of Israel, the converts from which were not so numerous at that time; but of Jews and Gentiles together, though it be figuratively expressed by sealing those of the twelve tribes of Israel. But this following vision, as I take it, is of the church triumphant in heaven, consisting of all true believers of all nations, that either had, or ever should suffer martyrdom for their fidelity to Christ: For it relates to their glorious and blessed state, in its utmost purity

and perfection, after they shall have got through their tribulations, when God will dwell among them, and wipe away all tears from their eyes, (*ver. 15,—17.*) which, in this prophetic book is, I think, descriptive of the heavenly state: (*chap. xxi. 3, 4.*) And indeed all the expressions here used are too strong and magnificent to be applied to any state of the church on earth; unless we suppose, with some, that it relates to the Millennium. But the distant prospect of the time when that should be, seems not so well suited to support the faith and patience of suffering saints in the approaching and succeeding ages, (which is the evident intention of this prophecy) as a representation

tation

which no man
could number, of
all nations, and
kindreds, and peo-
ple, and tongues,
stood before the
throne, and before
the Lamb, clothed
with white robes,
and palms in their
hands;

their vision of the glorious state of the church triumphant in heaven, to encourage and comfort me and all sincere believers, against the greatest violence of persecution, that would follow the conversion of the Roman empire in succeeding ages of antichristian tyranny and idolatry: And I beheld, with admiration and transports of joy, a vast multitude, which, though distinctly known to God, and comparatively speaking, but a *remnant* and *little flock*; yet absolutely, and in itself considered, is so great as to exceed the power of any creature to cast up, and give their sum total; as they are collected together in consequence of their having been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, (*chap. v. 9.*) out of all nations, and families, and kindreds, and people of different languages, wheresoever they were scattered through the earth. These stood with holy boldness and full acceptance before the throne of glory, and before Jesus Christ, who appeared as a Lamb that had been slain, (*chap. v. 6, 12.*) to recommend them to the divine favour, by his merit and mediation; and they were arrayed with illustrious robes of righteousness, the emblems of honour and acceptance, purity, and sublime pleasure; and carried palm branches in their hands, the tokens of victory and triumph, joy and praise, like the *hosannas* that were sung by the Jews at their feast of tabernacles. (See the paraphrase and note on *Matth. xxi. 9.*)

10. And cried
with a loud voice,
saying, Salvation
to our God, which
sitteth upon the
throne, and unto
the Lamb.

10 And they lifted up their voices with zealous, loud, and cheerful acclamations, saying, We ascribe all the glory, not only of our happy and complete deliverance from the severities of persecutions, but from all the evil of sin and sorrow on earth, and of deserved wrath and ruin in hell; and we give the glory of our advancement to all the dignity and blessedness of heaven, entirely and alone to our gracious, reconciled, and covenant-God and Father, who sits with august majesty on his imperial throne, and is the original contriver, appointer, and giver of all salvation; and to the great Redeemer, who was slain, as a lamb offered in sacrifice to expiate our sins, and procure that salvation which is in him with eternal glory.

11 And all the
angels stood round
about

11, 12 And, methought, the whole host of angels appeared as standing round about the throne, and encircling

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tation of their still more glorious dignity and triumph in heaven, to which they shall be admitted, *immediately* after their tribulations on earth, in their several ages, till the whole number of them shall be completed; when a chorus of all the holy angels shall join their songs,

ver. 11.: And all the innumerable company of angels can scarce be thought to leave their habitation in heaven, and come down to live a thousand years with the saints on earth; nor is any hint of that kind given in the description of the *Millenium* glory.

about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

circling the representatives of the whole church, and of its ministering servants; and they prostrating themselves with the deepest humility, reverence, and adoration before the imperial throne, joined in concert with the *general assembly and church of the first-born*, (Heb. xii. 22, 23.) offering up thanksgivings and praises to God with them, saying, as they had before in ascriptions of glory to God and the Lamb, (*chap. v. 11, — 13.*) *Amen*. We heartily concur in this joyful song. May all devout and solemn acknowledgments and adorations of God, as infinitely blessed in himself, and the fountain of all blessedness to others; and may all ascriptions of honour, in consideration of his divine perfections, and wonderful works of nature, providence, grace, and glory; and of the consummate wisdom that shines forth in them all; and may all thanksgivings for every favour of a temporal, spiritual, and eternal nature; and the highest ascriptions, that are due from angels and men, together with the most solemn acknowledgments of his universal dominion, and almighty power, be paid to our great and glorious God to the endless ages of eternity! *Amen*, so it ought to be, so we heartily desire it may be, and so we firmly believe it shall be.

13 Then one of the forementioned elders, or representatives of the church, came near, as another of them had done on a former occasion, (*chap. v. 5.*) and called to me to engage my attention, and to enquire what my thoughts were of this illustrious company, saying, Do you understand the meaning of this vision? Who, think you, are these excellent persons that appear so gloriously apparelled with glittering spotless robes? And from what condition, and how is it that they came hither?

14 To which I answered in an humble, modest, and respectful manner, and with a free confession of my own ignorance, you, Sir, understand these things much better than I, and, as it lies in your power, I should esteem it a great favour, if you would please particularly to inform me of them. Then, to give me a clear and satisfying account of this delightful scene, he readily replied, This glorious shining and palm-bearing multitude, are the faithful saints and servants of Christ, that have bravely encountered sore trials and afflictions for his name's sake on earth; (like those mentioned *chap. vi. 9, — 11.*) and so *through much tribulation have entered into the kingdom of God*; (Acts xiv. 22.) and the splendid robes of perfect righteousness in which they shine, are not purified and brightened by their own sufferings, or the blood of martyrdom, any more than by their tears

of repentance, or their own obedience; but merely by the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. Not as literally washed with it, which would have made them *red* instead of *white*; but as shed, and applied in its merit and virtue, for the remission of their sins, and for their complete justification, and spotless purity, through faith in him. (See *Eph. v. 25, — 27.*)

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

15 It is on this account, as the only meritorious or deserving cause of it, that they are now exalted to a state of the sublimest purity and dignity, joy and praise, in the immediate presence of God as sitting upon his heavenly throne; and that they incessantly worship, adore, and glorify him, as his attendants, in his holy and blessed habitation on high, which, though properly speaking, there is no night or darkness in that state, (*chap. xxi. 5.*) may be called, their *serving him day and night*, in allusion to the priests and *Levites*, who continually served God by night, as well as by day, in the tabernacle and temple; (*Pf. cxxxiv. 1.*) and his glorious majesty, who sits upon the throne, will ever have the most intimate communion with them, and gracious residence among them, to consummate their felicity.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

16 In this honourable and blissful state, they, according to the fullest meaning of ancient prophecy, (*Is. xlix. 10.*) shall never have any painful appetites, like those of unsatisfied hunger and thirst; nor any cravings of greater happiness than they enjoy, much less of earthly things, and much less still of carnal and sensual pleasures: Nor shall they ever be molested any more with fiery trials that scorch like the sun in its full strength; nor be made uneasy, or incommoded by sin or Satan, afflictions or labours of any kind, that are uncomfortable, tedious, and irksome, like the heat of a sultry day.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

17 For, as to their *not hungering nor thirsting*, the exalted Lamb of God, who, in distinction from the saints and angels that stand before, and round about the throne, (*ver. 9, 11.*) sits with his heavenly Father, possessed of all divine majesty and power, as God-man Mediator, in his throne, (*chap. iii. 21.*) He will perpetually supply and satiate them with the richest entertainments; and will conduct them to the fountain-head of ever-flowing, over-flowing, and ever-living and reviving consolations: And, as to their being *freed from all uneasiness*, the great and blessed God will entirely take away all causes and appearances of trouble from them; and as a tender mother, not only suckles her child, but wipes off the mournful tears that trickle down from its eyes, and doth all she can to cheer and comfort it; so their God will effectually

fectually remove all sorrow from their hearts, and every token of it; all former grievances being passed away. (*Chap. xxi. 4.*)

RECOLLECTIONS.

With what kindness, care, and tenderness doth God indulge his people, by giving them seasonable respites from the troubles of this evil world! Yea, so great is his favour toward them, that, for their sakes, he mercifully averts public judgments from those nations of the earth, that permit them to live in peace and safety; and when, through the corruption of mankind, persecutions and errors threaten the church of Christ, he will take effectual care of his sealed ones, and have a vast many thousands of them here below to own, honour, and serve him. How should it animate their faith, patience, and courage, under all their tribulations for Christ, to think of the glorious, final, and eternal issue of them all! God, in the riches of his grace, will abundantly more than compensate their severest hardships for his sake. Innumerable multitudes of them from among all nations shall shine in the brightest robes of purity, righteousness, and glory, as made white by the blood of the Lamb; and they shall triumph, as with palms of victory, joy, and praise in their hands; and shall worship God with unwearied and uninterrupted pleasure in his heavenly temple above. God himself, as sitting on his throne of glory, will dwell, in the most immediate and delightful manner among them, to banish all uneasiness far from them; and he, as the original fountain, and Jesus Christ as the purchaser, and immediate bestower of all possible blessedness, will refresh and completely satisfy them with the most refined and transporting, substantial, and noble enjoyments, ever fresh and flowing to the utmost of their enlarged capacities and desires. And O, with what cheerful acclamations in heaven will they disclaim all merit of their own, and ascribe the entire glory of their salvation to the free and distinguishing grace of God, through the atoning sacrifice of his Son! And with what harmonious concert will all the holy angels join in celebrating the praises of God's perfections, and of his works of nature, providence, and grace! To whom, together with the Lamb, be ascribed all glory for ever and ever, Amen.

C H A P. VIII.

The seventh seal is opened, and silence follows in heaven for a little space; and seven angels appear with seven trumpets, ready to proclaim the purpose of God relating to the Roman empire, the church and the world, after the Christian faith had been publicly embraced, and began to be corrupted; 1, 2. But, before they execute their office, another angel appears at the golden altar to offer incense with the prayers of all saints, and then casts fire on the earth, which produces terrible storms of vengeance; 3,—5. Hereupon the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets in their order as signals of the judgments of God that were to be gradually executed on the Empire, 6. The first angel blows his trumpet, which is followed with a storm of hail, fire, and blood; signifying the great destruction that should fall on the Christian empire after Constantine's death, till the reign of Theodosius, from about the year 337 to 379, 7. The second trumpet is followed with a burning mountain cast into the sea; signifying the invasion of Italy by the northern nations, till Rome was sacked by Alaric about the year 412, 8, 9. The third trumpet is followed with the falling of a fiery star called Wormwood, on the rivers; signifying the devastations in Italy, that put an end to the Roman empire, and set up the kingdom of the Goths about the year 493, 10, 11. The fourth trumpet is followed with a darkening of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, signifying further wars in Italy, that ended in a total subversion of the power of Rome, and the setting up of the Exarchate of Ravenna about the year 568, 12. And another angel denounces still greater woes to come upon the earth under the three following trumpets, 13.

P E R I O D II.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

AND now, to go on with my prophetic vision of the righteous judgments of God, that would fall on the Roman empire after it became Christian, but degenerated into persecuting and erroneous principles and practices; when the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, who had opened the six former seals, (*chap. vi.*) took off the seventh and last, to disclose the contents of that part of the roll, I perceived that, as in the temple-worship, the people were silently employed in secret prayer at the time of incense, (*Luke i. 10.*) there was a profound silence in heaven for a little while, in humble expectation of what was next to be revealed after the short interval of the church's peace and prosperity. (*Chap. vii. 3.*)

And I saw the seven angels which stood

2 And I saw the seven angels hereafter mentioned, (*ver. 6.*) who stood before God to receive and execute his commands: And there was an appearance of

stood before God: and to them were given seven trumpets.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

seven trumpets that were given to them, each of them having one, to proclaim the judgments, which were to be executed in seven successive seasons, till they all should be completed.

3 And I beheld another angel, superior to all these, even the Messenger of the covenant, the same head and Lord of all the angelic host, that appeared before with a sovereign command over them: (*chap. vii. 2.*) * And as the high priest on the great day of atonement carried a more than ordinary quantity of incense in a golden censer, and burnt it in the holy of holies before the Lord; so this glorious angel of God's presence, who in his incarnate person is the gospel high priest, was represented as standing in a ministering posture before the altar of burnt-offering, to signify the atonement he had made by his blood; and then as having a golden censer, filled with live coals from the altar, to signify that his mediation is carried on in virtue of his expiatory sacrifice: And much incense was given him, to signify the fulness of his merit in the discharge of his priestly office, to which he was called, and for which he was anointed by God the Father, (*ὡς ἄνθρωπος προσευχῆς*) to the end that he might give or add it to the humble, importunate, and believing prayers, of all that are cleansed by his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, to render them acceptable to God in his intercession before the mercy-seat, on throne of grace; as the sweet perfume of incense which was offered on the golden altar was a typical appointment for adding fragrancy to the prayers of *Israel*, his peculiar people.

4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.

4 And as the perfuming smoke of incense, which was made of the finest aromatic spices, ascended up like a cloud to heaven with the prayers of the congregation of *Israel*, that were offered at the same time; so a representation was made of the virtue of Christ's sacrifice, which mingled like a sweet odour, with the prayers of holy worshippers; and, like the incense that passed through the hands of the high priest, was presented

NOTE.

* I think what is said of this angel can agree to no other than Christ himself; (see the note on *chap. vii. 2.*) and I am inclined, with Sir Isaac Newton, (see his observations on the apocalypse, p. 264.) to understand this offering of incense in allusion to the service of the high priest, who, on the day of expiation, took fire from the great altar in a golden censer, and carrying a more than common quantity, which might be called much incense, burnt it before the Lord within the veil on that day: (*Lev. xvi. 12, 13. and Heb. ix. 4.*) For this seems to be the most lively and striking figure of the intercession of Christ, our great high priest, who is entered into that within the veil, even heaven itself. (*Heb. ix. 12. and vi. 19, 20.*) However, it is of little importance whether we take the allusion to be to the daily service of the high priest, (*Exod. xxx. 7, 8.*) or to that on the great day of atonement.

presented together with them before God, by the Mediator and Messenger of the new covenant in his ever-prevailing advocacy, to cover their imperfections, and recommend them to the divine favour for audience and acceptance.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

5 And the Angel of God's presence having thus, in his tender love and compassion to his people, sealed and taken care of them, (*chap. vii. 2, 3.*) and secured a gracious answer to their regular prayers, (*ver. 4.*) before the intended desolations were to come upon the earth; He then, to shew his just indignation against his and their enemies, was represented to me, as taking the censer, and as going from the golden to the brazen altar, where he filled it with the burning coals of this altar, which were an emblem of the wrath of God that could be appeased only by a sacrifice of atonement; and he threw them down with mighty vengeance on the *Roman* empire, the principal part of this earth, that had corrupted the Christian faith, worship, and manners, and endeavoured by all subtle and violent measures to suppress them: And immediately hereupon, there arose a terrible tempest, which produced roaring winds, and loud claps of thunder, and strong flashes of lightning, and a shocking earthquake, as though all nature were dissolving; which were awful emblems of direful judgments, that were to be denounced, as what should be executed in their order.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

6 Accordingly the seven angels, who were commissioned to sound the alarm in their respective courses, and were no longer under restraint, as the four angels were before, (*chap. vii. 3.*) seemed to put themselves into a proper posture for blowing each one his trumpet in its course.

7 The first angel sounded; and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

TRUMPET I.] 7 Then the first angel sounded his trumpet; and thereupon I had a vision of a dreadful tempest of hail and lightning, attended with a shower of blood, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*; (*Ex. ix. 24, 25.*) which signified, in the style of prophecy, great devastation upon the wicked of the earth; (*Pf. xi. 6. and xviii. 13. Is. xxviii. 2. and xxix. 6. and xxx. 30.*) and so mighty was the desolation, that it cut off the great men and common people, as emblematically represented by the blast, that such storms ordinarily bring upon the trees and green grass of the field; which may be considered as a figurative

K. k 2

description

N O T E.

* *Voices, thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes*, attended with fire, are emblems in Scripture language of dreadful calamities, which God inflicts in

ways of righteous judgment, and particularly in this prophetic book, *chap. xvi. 19. and xx. 9.*

description of the woful calamities, that were to be brought upon the Empire between the years 337 and 379, by means of the wars of *Constantine*, *Constance*, and *Constantius*, the three sons of *Constantine* the Great, which commenced soon after his decease; and issued in the destruction of his family, and in the terrible ravages, that were made on all ranks and degrees of people, together with the fruits of the ground, and vast effusions of blood, by the northern barbarous nations that broke in upon the Empire; * which might be styled *the third part* of the earth, according to the reckoning of the ancients, who, till *America* was discovered, spoke of the earth as divided into three parts, of which *Europe* was one.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea; and the third part of the sea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

TRUMPET II.] 8, 9 Then the second angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I saw an awful appearance, as though a huge mountain, all on fire, was thrown into the sea; by means of which the waters of the third part of the sea were turned into blood, as the great river *Nile* formerly was in one of the plagues of *Egypt*. (Exod. vii. 17, 18.) And this was so grievous a calamity, that the third part of the fishes, which swam in the sea, were killed; and the third part of men, in their ships of war and vessels of merchandize, were destroyed; † which was a figurative prediction of further judgments that should make dismal havock upon *Rome* and *Italy*, and other parts of the western empire, to the destruction of abundance of their inhabitants, strength, and riches; and may be considered as fulfilled, by repeated irruptions of the *Vandals* and other barbarous nations into *France* and *Spain*, &c. and by *Alaricus's* plundering *Rome*; and laying waste the country round about it, between the years 379 and 412.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part

of TRUMPET III.] 10, 11 Then the third angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon methought, I beheld a great blazing star falling down, like a fiery meteor, from heaven to the earth, and it lighted upon the third part of the rivers and springs or fountains of waters: And so exceeding bitter were the fruits of this,

NOTES.

* The histories of the times that correspond to this and the following prophecies, may be consulted in Messrs. *Meade*, *Vitringa*, *Whiston*, and *Lowman*, the last of which I have mostly fallen in with, and to which the reader is there referred for these and several other facts under this and the succeeding trumpets.

† In the style of prophecy, mountains are emblems of cities, and casting them into the sea of the most terrible desola-

tions, Jer. li. 25.—30. and Pl. xli. 4.: *The sea*, as a collection of waters, is an emblem of large collections of people into one body politic. Rev. xvii. 15. And *dead fishes of the waters* are emblems of the destruction of nations, Ezek. xxix. 4.—12. And so these are proper figures to represent *Rome*, and the country round about, as tumbling into confusion and ruin.

* M
third a
soon af
the tit
about

of the rivers, and
upon the fountains
of waters:

11 And the name of the Har is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

this, that from thence it may be figuratively called *Warmwood*; and by the falling down of this flaming star, those waters were infected with such a poisonous quality, as killed multitudes of people that drank of them, because they were most grievously bitter. Thereby signifying still greater desolations, that should cut off several of the *Roman* provinces, and, in a manner, destroy the government itself, the seat of the Empire, and the fountain of all authority in it; which may be considered as emblematical of the following invasions of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, and other barbarous nations between the years 412 and 493, chiefly under the command of *Genseric*, who came into *Italy*, and sacked and plundered *Rome* about the year 455; and under the command of *Odoacer* king of the *Heruli*, who again invaded *Italy* about the year 476, and marched to *Rome*, which he also took and plundered, carrying away a great deal of its treasure and a multitude of people; and returning afterwards, retook *Rome*, conquered all *Italy*, and, assuming the title of king to himself, dethroned *Augustulus* the *Christian* emperor; which was figuratively represented according to prophetic style, by the *falling of a star*, (Isa. xiv. 12,—15. and Dan. viii. 10.) and by *drying up fountains and rivers of water*; (Isa. xix. 4,—8. and Hof. xiii. 15, 16.) and which was like that plague of *Egypt*, whereby the rivers, ponds, and pools stank, and all their waters were turned into blood. (Exod. vii. 20, 21.)

11 And the fourth angel found, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise.

TRUMPET IV.] 12 Then the *fourth* angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I saw a thick darkness covering the face of the heavens to such a degree, that the sun which shone on this third part of the earth, gave no light by day, nor the moon nor stars by night; inasmuch that all was gloomy and dismal, entirely dark unto a total eclipse, which overshadowed this third part of the earth, both day and night; which might signify the utter destruction of the imperial city, and of all its authority, both supreme and subordinate, as lodged in the hands of princes, nobles, and inferior magistrates under its former constitution, according to prophetic representations of the dreadful downfall of kingdoms and nations, by the *darkning of the sun, moon, and stars*. (Isa. xiii. 9,—11. and Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8:)* and this

N O T E

* Mr. Lowman, in his history of the third and fourth trumpets, observes, that soon after Odoacer had taken to himself the title of king of Italy, (some make it about two years) "Theodorick, at the

head of the *Goths* in *Illyricum*, attacks *Odoacer's* new founded kingdom in *Italy*, engages *Odoacer*, overcomes him, and puts him to death; and so founded the *Gothic* kingdom of *Italy*, which continued

may be considered as fulfilled between the years 493 and 568, by means of the wars in *Italy*, between the *Goths* and the forces of *Justinian* the emperor of the east, which lasted about twenty years; and in the course of which *Rome* was besieged and taken five times; and all the country suffered the greatest calamities of war, attended with the pestilence and famine, till, at length, *Rome* was entirely subdued; and deprived of all remains of authority, and subjected to the *Exarchate*, which was set up at *Ravenna* about the year 568.

73 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.

13 And while I was waiting to hear the fifth angel sound his trumpet, I saw in my vision and heard, not one of the seven but another angel, who flew with the utmost speed through the midst of heaven, and cried aloud with a terrible voice, that all might hear, and the church might take warning, and prepare for all events, saying, Though the judgments which have been foretold, under the four trumpets already sounded, as to come upon the *Roman* empire, and particularly on its *western* part, for its degeneracy since it became Christian, are very great; yet much more tremendous and extensive calamities still are appointed of God to be inflicted, particularly on the subjects of its *eastern* part, by means of the severer punishments that are to be denounced against them, for their gross corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners, by the three other trumpets which the remaining three angels are to sound in their order, as signals of them; and so he ushered them in with three *woes*, distinctly repeated, that would fall in their order upon the *eastern* as well as the *western* empire; the *two first* by the ravages of the *Saraceni* under the *fifth* and *sixth* trumpets; and the *third* upon all antichristian nations, *eastern* and *western*, under the *seventh*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How short are the intervals of prosperity and peace to the church of Christ in persecuting ages! But while they are engaged in humble and solemn addresses at the

NOTE.

tinued many years under his successors, till it was subdued by *Narset*, for the emperor *Justinian*, A. D. 553. However under the *Gothic* kingdom *Rome*, though it lost the supreme authority of the Empire, was permitted to retain some appearance of its ancient form of government and magistracy. *Theodorick* made *Ravenna* the seat of his kingdom; yet *Rome* retained its senate and consuls, and the image of its former government.—A little after the *Exarchate* of *Ravenna* was established by the emperor *Justin II. Longinus* is sent into *Italy*. He appoints a new form of government: The seat of government was from that time fixed at *Ravenna*, and every city of *Italy* entirely subjected to the *Exarch*, both in things civil and military.—Thus *Rome* lost all her dignity and authority, her senate and consuls; and was put upon a level with all the lesser cities and towns of *Italy*, and became only a small duchy of the *Exarchate*, &c.

the throne of grace, and commit themselves and all their concerns by faith to the wise, holy, and sovereign disposals of divine Providence, Jesus their great High-priest, altar, and sacrifice, as well as the Angel of the covenant, presents their prayers in his intercession, and perfumes them with the odours of his atoning death, which is like the sweetest of all incense to take away the offensiveness of their imperfections, that they may be graciously accepted, heard, and answered. O happy provision for all the saints in the worst of times! They are taken under divine care and protection, while all the terrors of God's righteous vengeance are coming upon the wicked of this world, and the degenerate professors of Christ's name. What images of horror can be strong enough to paint out their bitter distress! We may read something of it in the striking emblems of tempestuous winds, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes, dreadful storms of hail, fire, and blood, burning mountains, falling stars, and the most dismal darkness, that throw all nature into convulsions, and spread consternation and miseries, death and ruin, among all ranks and orders of men upon earth, especially among those that wear, but dishonour and abuse, the Christian name by their abominations. And yet how long suffering and slow to anger is the gracious God! What previous repeated warnings and notices beforehand doth he give, by his word and providence, to lead men to repentance, when he is about to come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth! And how gradually doth he proceed in executing first lesser, and then greater judgments upon them, proportionate to the increase of their iniquity, and obstinacy in it, till all former methods having failed of reclaiming them, he makes an utter end of them! But O the comfort and encouragement of true believers! The blessed God takes their part against all his and their enemies; there shall soon be an end of all their troubles, though the wicked fall into mischief, never to rise more. *The righteous shall rejoice when he sees, but shall not feel the vengeance; so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judges in the earth.* (Pl. lviii. 10, 11.)

C H A P. IX.

The fifth trumpet is followed with a representation of another star as falling from heaven, and opening the bottomless pit, out of which swarms of locusts come to torment men upon earth; signifying the rise of Mahomet, and the spreading of his imposture, and of the Saracen dominion under him and his successors in the eastern as well as western empire, between the year 568 and 675, 1.—12. The sixth trumpet is followed with a representation of the loosing of four angels that were bound in the great river Euphrates; signifying God's taking off the restraints that had been laid for some years upon the Saracens, and now permitting them to invade the Empire again, and make further progress in their conquests, between the year 675 and 750, 13.—21.

TEXT.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

PARAPHRASE.

TRUMPET V. being the }
first wo-trumpet.

AFTER the solemn warning given (chap. viii. 13.) of the three following woes, The fifth angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I saw the appearance of a large star, representing a person that had fallen, (πρωτοκωστα) like a pestilential meteor, from heaven down upon the earth. And permission was granted him for exerting destructive power, signified by the emblem of a key, with which he might open the gate of hell to let out the unclean

unclean spirits that had been shut up there, as in a bottomless depth of horror and darkness; (*chap. xx. 1,—3.*) * which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the rise of *Mahomet*, and of the irruption of the *Saracens* under him and his successors into the eastern, as well as western empire of the *Romans*, to propagate his impostures, who revolted from Christianity, and set up a dominion among them by the assistance of infernal spirits, as might best answer their wicked temper and design.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened, by reason of the smoke of the pit.

2 And this impostor, as I saw in my vision, made use of his power to open the mouth of the infernal abyss; and immediately thereupon a thick and dark smoke burst out of the pit of hell, like the smoke that ascends from a large burning kiln or stove, and like that which rose from the conflagration of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*: (*Gen. xix. 28.*) And so thick was this hideous smoke of the pit, that the face of the sun, and the whole region of the air were covered with horrid darkness; which may be considered as an emblem of the gross errors that would be spread by *Mahomet* and his followers, to darken the eyes of men's understandings, and hide the light of truth from them, and to destroy all that was dear and valuable to them, in great fury, as the judgments of God are expressed by like figures. (*Pf. xviii. 8. and Isa. xiv. 31.*)

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts up, on the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

3 And, to set forth the pernicious nature of this black smoke, methought, I saw the appearance of a formidable swarm of locusts issuing out from thence, after the manner of natural locusts, that commonly lay their eggs and breed in deep pits, out of which they rise and cover the face of the earth, as they did in one of the plagues of *Egypt*: (*Exod. x. 4, 5, 12,—15.*) And they, by divine permission, were exceeding

NOTE

* Some make this star that fell from heaven to point at Pope *Boniface* the third, who was the first that assumed the title of universal bishop in the year 606 by the grant of the tyrant *Phocas*; and they accordingly explain the locusts to mean the *Romish* clergy, and particularly the *Jesuits*. But this order of men in the apostate church, was not founded till several hundreds of years after the time that this trumpet seems to relate to; nor does it agree to the nature of this prophecy, which (as I take it) principally respects the eastern empire; nor to the general nature of the trumpets, which sound misery and destruction, not so much to the true church of Christ, as to the Empire. I therefore chuse, with many others, and think it most agreeable

to the following description of the locusts, to understand it of *Mahomet*, who likewise began his pretences to inspiration about the year 606, and under whom, and his successors, the *Saracens* made great conquests in *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Africa*, which commenced many years after the *Exarchate* had been set up at *Ravenna*, and a few years before *Mahomet* died, which, according to *Dean Prideaux*, (see his life of *Mahomet*, pag. 70.—76. edit. 7.) was in the year 632; and the conquests he made were carried on with great rapidity and extent under his successors, to about the year 651, soon after which a stop was put to them by the death of *Othman*, about 655, for about 50 years.

ceeding malignant and mischievous, like the most venomous *land-scorpions*, that have both ability and inclination to wound and torment men upon the earth; which may be considered as an emblem of vast multitudes of *Saracens* or *Arabians*, that would break into the Empire, and especially the eastern part of it, to make speedy and dreadful havock upon it, according to prophetic descriptions of the destruction of nations by prodigious numbers of *grass-hoppers* and *locusts*: (Judg. vi. 5. and Isa. xxxiii. 4.)

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

4 And as these were not locusts in a *literal*, but only in a *metaphorical* sense, to signify their *multitude* and the *swiftness* of their flight for doing mischief; but could proceed no farther than God would permit them, he effectually charged and over-ruled them, by his providence, not to injure the grass of the earth, nor any green herb, nor any fruit-tree, which natural locusts usually love to prey upon; nor to vent their poisonous and destructive influence upon any but those men, whom he had not ordered to be sealed, as though marked on their foreheads, as he had his own peculiar people, on another occasion before; (*chap. vii. 3.*) which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the special care that God would take to preserve his faithful servants, with their ministers or others, who have the truth of grace in them, to preserve them from the mischievous errors, and cruel violence of those wicked enemies to Christian religion, that the true church might not be destroyed by their ravages, nor corrupted by their new impostures; while he suffered them to infect only the idolatrous church of *Rome*, and to prey upon them.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he stinketh a man.

5 And as a further limitation of their power, even with respect to carnal and apostate Christians themselves, they were ordered, for the present, not to persecute them unto death, nor to murder such multitudes of them, as they afterward would under the *sixth trumpet*; but to harass, ravage, and distress them for a season; which may be figuratively called *five months*, in allusion to the time of natural locusts living in the summer season *: And these savage creatures

N O T E.

* The *natural locusts* are said to live only the five summer months inclusive of *May* and *September*; and the way of the *Saracens* wars upon the Empire was by incursions only in the summer seasons, to which their *tormenting five months* seems more naturally to refer, than to the years of the continuance of their power, by casting the months into days, at the rate of thirty days to a month;

and then reckoning each day for a year, the amount of which is 150 years; which some suppose to be descriptive of the *space of time* from the beginning to the end of these incursions of the *Saracens* into the Empire: And as this interpretation has something plausible in it, according to the common scheme of the *trumpet prophecies*, I would refer the reader to what *Messrs. Jurieu, Dandus,*

tures went to the extent of their commission by afflicting them in as grievous and painful a manner, as though it were by the wound of a scorpion, when he strikes a man with his sting; which may be considered as a figurative prediction, that these *Saracen*-spoilers should be permitted to spread sore calamities all around them, though restrained from such terrible slaughter, as they would afterward make at their next invasion.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

6 And their various ways of distressing men in those days were represented to be so severe, as would embitter their lives to such a degree, that, as was prophesied of *Judah*, when their threatened miseries should come upon them for their idolatry, (*Jer. viii. 3.*) they would choose death rather than life; and would wish for death to put an end to their torments, rather than continue to live under them; but their enemies were restrained, at present, from affording them this piteous sort of relief to their groans.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

7 And so dreadful was the appearance of the forms of these figurative locusts, that they seemed to be like horses ready accoutred for war, (*Joel ii. 4.*) and to carry a resemblance of golden crowns on their heads; and their faces had the shape and air of men: All which may be considered as an emblematical prediction of the terrible ravage that the *Saracens* would make in battle, with great sagacity, speed, and strength, according to their customary way of fighting upon *Arabian* horses, which, like locusts, were swift of sight in pursuit of victory; whose riders would triumph, like crowned conquerors of several kingdoms, where they should come; and would wear turbants, like crowns, on their heads.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

8 And, as a further description of this very people, they were represented in my vision, as wearing their hair in an effeminate manner, like women, after the *Arabian* fashion, either dishevelled to a great length upon their backs, or else plaited and tressed up; which may be considered, as an emblem of their insinuating and lecherous temper: And the appearance of their teeth was sharp and strong, like those of lions, to signify their rapacious fury, and the prevalence of their arms, as a *strong people set in battle-array*, according to the prophetic meaning of such images. (*Joel i. 6. and ii. 5.*)

9 And,

N O T E.

Mede, and *Dr. More* have said upon it, them to death for their profession of Christianity; nor did they succeed in their sieges of *Constantinople* and *Rome* then, as they did afterwards under the sixth trumpet.

However, it is generally agreed, that the *Saracens* in their first expedition chiefly plundered and ravaged, but did not commonly kill those of the Christian nations, whom they conquered; nor put

9 And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

9 And, to shew that their *defensive* was equal to their *offensive* armament, they, in allusion to the hard horny skin of the natural locusts, appeared with breast-plates, to secure their hearts from mortal wounds, as hard and impenetrable as if made of iron; a proper emblem of their being proof against the assaults of those in the Empire with whom they waged war; and against their being overcome in battle, or invaded, by way of reprisal, in their own land. And the rushing speed and multitude of their armies on *Arabian* horses, which would give dreadful alarms to all that were near them, was represented by the loud noise that locusts make with clapping their wings when they fly in large companies, as if it were the sound of a multitude of chariots and horses, clattering and rushing into the battle, according to the description that is given of armies in prophetic language. (*Joel* ii. 4, 5.)

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power was to hurt men five months.

10 Furthermore, they were represented in uncommon and surprising forms, as having long tails, like those of venomous scorpions; and they, like them, had desperate stings in their tails; signifying that they would not only make dreadful havock by the power of their arms, but would also infect the wicked inhabitants of the Empire with their poisonous errors, by their false teachers, who, in prophetic style, are called *the tail*; (*Isa. ix. 15.*) and so, from first to last, would be very pernicious: And this power of theirs was to be continued, for a considerable time, to its proper period, like the power of locusts, that are lively and active for about five summer months, which is as long as they ordinarily live. (See the note on *ver. 5.*)

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

11 And there was something in this representation of them, directly contrary to the usage of *natural* locusts, *which have no king*: (*Prov. xxx. 27.*) But these figurative locusts appeared as under the dominion and government of a powerful, tyrannical, and malicious ruler, whose likeness they bear, and whose interests they serve; and he is no other than *primarily* the devil himself, that prince of darkness, and of the fallen angels in hell; or *secondarily* one of his wicked messengers, whose doctrine came from hell, whose name, as also the name of his *principal*, answerable to his temper, work, and design, is the *destroyer*, as is signified by the Hebrew word *abaddon*, and by the Greek word *apollyon*: Which may be considered, as intimating that Satan would be the principal chief; and, by his instigation and influence, *Mahomet*, under him, would be the grand leader of all the mischief and ruin, with respect to civil and re-

ligious concerns, which the *Saracens*, headed by *Mahomet*, and his successors, would bring upon the Empire, by the power of their arms, and the infection of their abominable errors, unto the destruction of the bodies and souls of men.

12 One woe is past, and behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

12 Thus the first signally terrible *wo*, which was denounced by the *fifth angel* to denote the judgments of God, that should befall the degenerate Christian empire, under the first invasions of the *Saracens*, is represented as what would be past and gone, about the year of our Lord 675, when they should bring that war to a conclusion. But, behold with astonishment, and assured expectation! There will be still two other yet more tremendous scenes of judgment opened, when the *sixth* and *seventh* angels shall blow their respective trumpets in their order; the account of which follows.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

TRUMPET VI. being the } 13, 14 Then the sixth
second *wo-trumpet*. } angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I heard a certain loud voice, (*φωνή μεγάλη*) proceeding from the golden altar of incense, which was exhibited to my view, like that which stood before the mercy-seat in the tabernacle, (*Exod. xxx. 1,—6.*) as being four-square, and having four horns, one at each corner of the altar; which may be considered as emblems of the intercession of Christ for his people, and of his power to protect them in the four corners of the earth; at which altar the Angel of the covenant offered up the prayers of all saints in the immediate presence of God, as has been represented: (*chap. viii. 3.*) And this being the voice of Christ himself, he, with sovereign authority, commanded the *sixth* angel that had the *second wo-trumpet*, saying to him, Set at liberty the four destroying angels, who have been under restraint for some time past, as messengers of wrath that are bound, as it were, in chains, at the great river *Euphrates* *; which may be considered as a figurative

NOTE.

* I should be strongly inclined, with Mr. Mede, and his many followers, to consider the *sixth trumpet*, as referring to the devastations made by the *Ottoman* or *Turkish* empire, were it not that this makes too great a gap upon the *close series* of prophecy, which, as I take it, is carried on from the beginning to the end: For the *Ottoman* empire did not rise till *Ottoman* founded it, from whom it took its name, and who died about the year 1326, which is between six and seven hundred years after what I apprehend to

be the period of the *fifth trumpet*; and therefore is not easily reconcileable to the regular and connected order of these predictions; unless upon the plan of *synchronisms*, which, though so commonly received, have always thrown the whole scheme into such confusion in my mind, as I could never get over, or tell how to adjust: And yet, I must confess, that the *sixth trumpet* has long appeared in my thoughts to be the most difficult, of any other part of the prophecy, to be reconciled with the orderly and well-connected

And the four angels, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men, ratative prediction of the order that would be given and fulfilled in the dispensations of Providence, to take off the restraint which had been laid on the *Saracens* for about fifty years, (see the note on *ver. 1.*) that they might go forth from all quarters of their land, to execute yet further judgments upon the degenerate Christian empire in every part of it toward the four corners of the earth; as four other angels had been before ordered to hold back, or let out, the four winds, that were designed for judgments, according to the will of God. (*Chap. vii. 1.*)

15 Hereupon the four angels, or messengers of divine wrath, were set at liberty, and stood ready to execute the judgments which God had further designed to bring upon the Romish pretendedly Christian, but really *antichristian* empire, according to the exact time of his appointment, whether it be to an hour, or a day, or a month, or a year, just as he should please to order it in his providence; and, in that precise time, to cut off a great number of the inhabitants of the Empire, under the style of the third part of the known world; which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the still more terrible desolation that the *Saracens* would make in the Empire, between the years 675 and 750, when they would enter *Spain* about the year 713 or 714, and obtain a complete victory over the *Spaniards*; soon after which they would overrun the whole country; and afterwards invade *France*, till they were defeated by *Charles Martel*, in a terrible and decisive battle, which put an entire stop to their arms about the year 734.

16 And

NOTE

next series of correspondent events. But I am much obliged to the learned Mr. *Lowman*, whose history of facts may probably account for it, which is all that I can pretend to in this and several other instances. I have therefore entirely followed the track that he has drawn out before us, relating to the sixth trumpet, as I have done, and shall in great measure do, in other particulars, where I think him to be in the right, referring the reader to consult his collection of authorities, which I now give notice of, once for all, whether his name be mentioned in the several places, or not. And the reason given in my paraphrase on this verse, why the destroying angels or messengers of wrath (which I take to mean the *Saracens*, as instruments of divine Providence, according to what is said of them, *ver. 16, 17.*) are spoken of as *four*, seems to me the most likely

of any other that I have met with, and falls in with what this learned writer goes into, according to the observation of Mr. *Daubus*, who takes the number *four* to denote a *universality* of the matter comprised, as the *four winds* signify *all the winds*. *Jer. xlix. 36. The four corners of the earth, all parts of the earth, Isa. xi. 12. and the four corners of the land, all parts of the land of Judea, Ezek. vii. 2.* And these destroying angels were bound in the great river *Euphrates*, according to his account, by the divisions and quarrels of the *Saracens* after the death of *Ottoman*, about the succession to the Empire, which kept them near the river *Euphrates*, where most of their battles were fought, and prevented their usual invasions and incursions into the *Roman* empire about 50 years.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen *were* two hundred thousand thousand; and I heard the number of them.

16 And the multitude of their horsemen, which their armies would mostly consist of, was represented to be so prodigiously great, that, as innumerable companies are expressed by *thousands of thousands*, and *ten thousand times ten thousand*; (chap. v. 11. and Dan. vii. 10.) so one would be apt to express this by two myriads of myriads, in astonishment at it: * And I heard this hyperbolical proclamation of their number, to signify that they would be, as it were, past all account.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone.

17 And in the like astonishing manner I beheld in my vision, that these innumerable and formidable *A-rabians*, terrible as an army with banners, rode upon warlike horses, and that their riders were furnished with an armour of breast-plates, defensive and repelling, as fire; illustrious, firm, and solid, as the jacinth stone; and invincible, as burning brimstone, which cannot easily be extinguished; † And the heads of their horses had an aspect as bold, fierce, and furious, as the heads of ravening lions: And there was a most tremendous appearance of streams of fire, and smoke, and brimstone, proceeding out of the mouths of the horses and their riders, with destructive force: All which may be considered as emblematical predictions of the wasting and murderous effects of this cruel victorious army of the *Saracens*, which would breath out nothing but misery, desolation, and slaughter.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

18 By these three powers of their armies, for dreadful devastation, as signified by the fire, and smoke, and brimstone, which appeared as proceeding out of their mouths, vast numbers of the invaded people of the Empire were miserably slain, and the rest suffered the greatest ravage and calamities of every other kind. (ver. 20.)

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto serpents, and

19 For, according to this representation of them, their power of spreading desolation, death, and ruin, seemed to proceed out of their mouths, which spoke terror and mischief, wheresoever they came; yea, like the first train of *Saracen* invaders, (ver. 10.) they were equally mischievous with their tails; For their tails had

N O T E S.

* It is not to be supposed that any army upon earth could consist of *two hundred thousand thousand*, or two myriads of myriads, as the words signify. (*Two myriads myriads*.) But as the *Saracens* were famous for the vast and almost incredible multitude of forces, which consisted chiefly of *cavalry* or *horsemen*, this number is mentioned in the hyperbolical strain to denote a sort of innumerable multitude.

† What is the meaning of breast-plates of *fire*, *jacinth*, and *brimstone*? I conceive can be only conjecture; and I have ventured to make mine, as being little satisfied with any other, and lead of all with that of *cannon* and *brimstone-powder*, or gun-powder, which are modern inventions, some hundreds of years after the time that I think this prophecy refers to. (See the note on ver. 14.)

and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

had an appearance like those of a monstrous sort of serpents, that are said to have two heads, one in the front, and the other at the tail of their bodies, for discharging their poison; which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the terrible wrath, destruction, and pestilential errors, that would be poured out by the *rear* as well *main body* of the *Saracen* armies in their second series of incursions into the *Roman* empire, which they would over-run with a deluge of destruction to the bodies and souls of men, from the beginning to the end of their victories, by the power of their princes, who, in prophetic style, are called *the head*; and by their false teachers, who are called *the tail*. (Hsa. ix. 14, 15.)

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

20, 21 And, notwithstanding all these dreadful judgments, the remainder of those men, who escaped death by the fury of these invaders, were so stupid and obstinate as not to take conviction of, and be reclaimed from their evil courses, which had brought these severe calamities upon them, that they might renounce and depart from their idolatrous worship of demons, and of the images, which their own hands had made of earthly materials; such as gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which are senseless, dumb idols, that can neither see who they are that adore them; nor hear their prayers; nor take one step to answer them for their relief: Nor did they repent of, and renounce their murderous practices; nor their enchantments; nor their whoredoms; nor their robberies, that they had defiled themselves with: Which may be considered as a prediction of the idolatrous worship of angels and departed saints, and of images made of all those sorts of materials, that would begin to prevail among the Popish part of the Empire in those days, and would be encouraged and confirmed by Pope Gregory the Second, in opposition to the Emperor Leo's orders to remove images out of the churches of *Italy*, about the year 726; and, instead of repenting of their image-worship, it was, at length, established by the authority of councils: And the other foretold abominations would still reign among them in their murdering the saints, in their pretended exorcisms, in their manifold uncleannesses, and in their various kinds of cheats, and impositions on the people; which, so far from being repented of, would grow more and more flagrant, till they should bring upon themselves the still more tremendous woes to be denounced by the *seventh* and *last trumpet*; (chap. xii. 14, 15.) and to be fulfilled by the pouring out of the *seven vials*. (Chap. xvi.)

RECOL-

RECOLLECTIONS.

How tremendous are the denunciations, and how sure, after solemn neglected warnings, are the executions of God's wrath on his enemies, for their oppressions of his church, and their other multiplied abominations! He, whose kingdom rules over all, has the most terrible armies of men and devils at his command, to execute deserved judgments by them. And how easily can he restrain, or let them loose, according to his sovereign and holy will, beyond which none of them can go! The instruments of Providence, as his messengers, shall, in his appointed time, bring distress and ruin upon carnal and idolatrous professors of Christ's name: They, like devouring locusts, raging lions, and venomous scorpions, spread their terrors and pestilential principles, to destroy the lives and liberties, bodies and souls of men, under the influence of tyrannical powers and false prophets on earth, and of the devil, who heads them, and sends them forth like a great smoke of horrid darkness, that rises out of the bottomless pit. They carry the face of men for sagacity, and of women for insinuation: but are really as ravenous and destructive, as the most furious beasts of prey and malignant serpents. But how great soever the plagues be, that, in the way of God's righteous judgments, are inflicted by one sort of Antichristian enemies, like *Mahometan-Saracens*, upon another, like the *papists*, for their idolatries, deceits, debaucheries, thefts, and murders; such is their stupidity and hardness of heart, that they will not repent of their crimes, nor be reformed; but still persist in them, and grow worse and worse, till, at length, all the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. But O what a comfort is it to God's own church and people, that Christ, who appears at the golden altar on their behalf, will take care of them, that they may have a hiding-place in every day of evil; and that the miseries, which will come upon others, shall not touch them, who have this seal, as it were on their foreheads, *The Lord knows them that are his*: (1 Tim. ii. 19.)

C H A P. X.

An august introduction to the seventh trumpet, in which the Angel of the covenant is represented as interrupting the train of prophecy, for a small interval, and as presenting a little open book, and uttering his voice as a lion, which is followed with seven thunders, intimating what he would further reveal under the seven vials; 1,—3. A voice from heaven forbids writing, at present, what was uttered by the seven thunders; 4. The angel solemnly swears that, at the expiration of the following prophecies, time should be no more, and that in the days of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished; 5,—7. A voice calls to John (who observes it) to eat the book, which would be sweet in his mouth, and bitter in his belly, 8,—10. And tells him he must further prophesy of the yet future state of the church and of the world, in a successive order of time, 11. which was to be from about the year 756, (when the Pope of Rome was first invested with temporal dominion) for 1260 years then to come, according to the general description that was to be given of it in the three following chapters.

TEXT.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the former representations which had been made to me of the state of the Roman empire and of the church, first *before*, and then *after*, the legal establishment of Christianity, I was favoured with

thed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

a succeeding vision, in which I beheld another angel, different from, and superior to those that had trumpets given them to sound, even Christ himself, (see the note on chap. vii. 2.) who, though acting the part of a divine messenger in human nature, is partaker of proper deity, as *the mighty God*; (Isa. ix. 6.) methought, I saw this glorious person descend from heaven, and covering himself with an illustrious cloud, as an emblem of his coming to make a further revelation for the instruction and comfort of the church; he appeared like the great Jehovah, *who makes the clouds his chariot*, (Pl. civ. 3.) as our blessed Lord did in his descent upon mount *Sinai*, and ascension to heaven: (*Exod. xxxiv. 5.* and *Acts i. 9.*) And there was the circular form of a beautiful rainbow over his head, like that which appeared round about the throne of God, (*Exek. i. 28.* and *Rev. iv. 5.* see the note there) in token of his being ever mindful of his covenant in the darkest times: (see *Gen. ix. 13.—17.*) And his countenance shone with a dazzling lustre, like the sun in its meridian brightness, to the admiration and joy of his people; and his feet appeared with awful majesty and strength, like pillars of burning brass, for supporting the faithful, and of fire for consuming his enemies, much after the same august manner in which he had exhibited himself before: (*Chap. i. 15, 16.* See the paraphrase there.)

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.

2 He also appeared as holding in his hand a little unfolded book, or roll, being the last part of the book which had been sealed, but the seals of which he had undertaken to loose; (*chap. v. 1.—7.*) and which might be called a *little book*, as it was now only the remainder of the whole, containing such events as should fall out in ages yet to come. And he having descended to this terraqueous globe, as consisting of land and water, methought, I saw him stand with his *right foot on the sea*, and with his *left on the earth*, to signify his sovereign dominion over all persons and things in *both*; and that he would extend his government and grace to the continents of *Asia, Africa, and Europe*, with their islands, including both the Eastern and Western empire, and even *the uttermost parts of the earth*, which his Father promised him the possession of. (*Psf. ii. 8.*)

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

3 In this situation he, who has been spoken of as *the lion of the tribe of Judah*, (*chap. v. 5.*) made proclamation with a strong and tremendous voice, as loud as the roaring of a lion, commanding silence and attention to what would follow: And no sooner had he given forth this order, than I heard seven other voices, as loud, awful, and terrible, as the greatest

clap of thunder, to denounce those judgments of God in general, which were to be particularly executed, in their order, on his antichristian enemies, by the pouring out of *seven vials* under the *seventh trumpet*.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

4 And when the seven thunder-like voices had finished their articulate denunciations, I was going to write them down, as apprehending that I was authorized so to do by the order before given me, (*chap. i. 19.*) and that they contained something of great consequence, for the comfort of the church under their antichristian-oppressions: But I was immediately stopped short, and prevented by another voice, which I heard, as directed to me from the throne of God in heaven, saying, Keep the things in your own breast, which have been uttered by the voices that were like seven thunders; ponder them in your heart, and conceal them, as yet, from public notice, as closely as if they were sealed up in a book, that none might read them: And there is no need for you to write them now, as the general hints, given by them, will be more particularly drawn out in some following visions; referring to those of the *seventh trumpet*, and the *seven vials* under it, which were afterwards to be revealed and recorded.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

5, 6 And to assure me of the certainty and importance of the things that were further to be revealed, relating to the affairs of the church and of the world in ages yet to come, the glorious Angel, whom, (as is said, *ver. 2.*) I saw standing with one foot upon the sea, and the other upon the earth, was represented to my view, as lifting up his hand to heaven, the throne of God's glory, according to the ancient manner and posture of taking solemn oaths; (*Gen. xiv. 22. and Dan. xii. 7.*) and as swearing by the eternal, almighty, and immortal God, who, in distinction from all idols, is *from everlasting to everlasting*, the only living and true God, and the Creator of the upper and lower worlds; of heaven and all the hosts thereof, whether in the aerial, the starry, or the heaven of heavens; and of the terraqueous globe, consisting of the earth and sea; and all things contained therein: And the purport of this solemn oath, which Christ took, as the Angel of the covenant and God's Messenger, was, that, as formerly in answer to the question, How long it should be to the end of the then predicted wonders? He swore that it should be for *a time, times, and a half**, meaning twelve hundred

NOTE.

* *A time, times, and a half time*, and *time shall be no longer*, seem to refer to the same period, and intimate, not that all time should then come to an end; but that

dred and sixty years; (*Dan. xii. 6, 7.*) so he now sware, that there should be no longer time, than *that*, before all antichristian enemies should be destroyed, and a glorious state of the church should take place, and put a final period to popish darkness, superstition, and idolatry, as will more distinctly appear in after-parts of this prophecy, though the time shall not be yet. (*xxix. 1. xxviii. 11.*)

7. But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

7. But he sware that in the days which would be pointed out by the denunciations of the *seventh* angel, when he should begin to sound his trumpet*, then all divine revelations and dispensations of Providence, relating to the trials and the succeeding happy days of the church, and the destruction of antichrist and exaltation of the kingdom of the Lord Jesus in all its glory, should be brought to a conclusion, which at present are secrets, and will all along in great measure be so, till correspondent facts, in a regular series, shall explain them, according to the prophecies and declarations that God has given of them to his ancient prophets, and particularly to his servants, *Daniel* (*chap. vii. 25,—28. and xii. 6, 7.*) and *Zeebariah*. (*Chap. xiv. 9.*)

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven

8 And after this scene of vision, the voice, which I had heard from heaven, (*ver. 4.*) called to me a-

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gain,

NOTES.

that the glorious state of the church should not be yet, till after the expiration of 1260 years, which are signified by other prophetic numbers that are made use of to give a *general view* of this period in the 11th, 12th, and 13th chapters of this vision: Accordingly a *time*, *times*, and a *half time*, as resolved into prophetic days, signify 1260 years, reckoning each day for a year, and each year to consist of twelve months of thirty days each month: For *three years*, which answer to *time*, *times*, (meaning two more times) and a *half time*, or half a year, make up 42 months, or 1260 years, which in our apostle's prophecy are parallel descriptions of the exact time of the *holy city's being trodden under foot by the Gentiles*, and of the *witnesses prophesying in sackcloth*; (*chap. xi. 2, 3.*) as also of the church's *flight into, and nourishment in the wilderness*; (*chap. xii. 6, 14.*) and of antichrist's or the *beast's reign*. (*Chap. xiii. 5.*)—It is evident, that, were we to take these numbers of days, months, and years, in a *literal* sense, the space of time would be abundantly too short for all the events that are spoken of as to be fulfilled in that time, which includes the whole pe-

riod of the last state of the sufferings of the church to its succeeding glorious state, in which Satan shall be shut up for a thousand years: But the other way of computing is agreeable to the prophetic style in former ages, which makes a *time* stand for a year, *Dan. iv. 25.*; and a *day* for a year, *Numb. xiv. 34.* and *Ezek. iv. 5, 6.* And *seventy weeks* signify not seventy times seven weeks of *natural* days, but seventy times seven years, *Dan. ix. 24.*; which, according to Sir Isaac Newton, were 490 years from the time that the dispersed *Jews* should be re-incorporated into a people and holy city, until the death and resurrection of Christ. (See his Observations on *Daniel*, p. 130. See also his note, p. 137. and 138, about the way of computing years, as consisting of 12 months, and every month of 30 days.)

* The *seventh trumpet*, in course, was to sound next, as beginning at the expiration of the *sixth*; but is deferred to *chap. xi. 15.* &c. by the interposition of a solemn preface, with which Christ, the Angel of the covenant, appeared, at the beginning of this chapter, to introduce it.

heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and eat it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and kings.

gain, saying, Go up to the Angel of the covenant, who you observe stands with his *right* foot on the sea, and his *left* on the earth, (*ver.* 2.) and receive from him the little book or roll, which is exhibited as unfolded in his hand, that you may have a clear insight into the great things contained therein, with a commission for making them known to others.

9 Accordingly, in obedience to the divine command, I drew near to the Head of all principalities and powers, and humbly besought him to deliver that little book to me, for my perusal. And he thereupon holding it out, said to me, as he formerly did to the prophet *Ezekiel*, (*chap.* iii. 1.—3.) Take it, according to your request; and then read and meditate upon it, and lay it up in your heart, till you understand and digest it, and be suitably affected with it, which, in figurative language, may be called eating it up; (*see Jer.* xv. 16.) and in so doing, you will find some of its contents, relating to the sore afflictions and persecutions that the church is to suffer, will be as extremely grievous to your mind as the bitterest sensations can be to your bowels: But the knowledge of the mind and will of God herein, as his secrets revealed to you, and more especially with respect to the tender care which he will all along take of his people, and to the final issue of all their troubles, and the glory that is to follow them, will be as sweet to your thoughts, as honey itself can be to your palate.

10 And I readily took the little open book or roll out of the Angel's hand, and did eat it up in the manner he ordered me, and I found by experience, as he told me I would, that my insight into the great mysteries revealed therein, taking them all together, was as delightful to my soul, as it is possible for honey to be to the taste. I, like the prophet, (*Jer.* xv. 16.) found God's words, and did eat them; and his word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: And afterward, when I came to reflect on the tribulations that must befall the church of Christ, before it attains its highest prosperity and glory on earth, my soul was as deeply affected with pain and anguish in the doleful prospect, as the bitterest tortures can be to the bowels.

11 Then this glorious Angel said to me, Sweet as these things are in one view, and bitter in another, you must not keep them to yourself, as you was ordered to do by the general intimations that were given you by the seven thunder-like voices; (*ver.* 4.) but you must go on to publish these, for the support and comfort of my people, in the further revelations that shall be made of them to you, as to come to pass

in their successive order *, upon many people, and nations, and countries of different languages; and upon rulers and potentates, as well as lower ranks of people, with regard to what shall befall them till the whole scheme of God's purposes, prophecies, and providences shall be accomplished concerning them, and shall end in the total overthrow of all antichristian enemies, and in the complete salvation of the church.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How endearing, august, and awful are the representations Christ has made of himself, as the Angel of the covenant; with a rainbow on his head, and a countenance as bright and dazzling as the sun; and with feet, like pillars of fiery metal, standing on the earth and sea, and a voice as loud and tremendous as the roaring of a lion! He is ever mindful of his covenant with his people in the worst of times; and amidst all the troubles that are denounced to his enemies, as with the voice of thunder, has all things under his dominion; and appears with illustrious majesty for the relief and comfort of those that belong to him, and for the terror and destruction of his and their enemies. These are things worthy of the closest meditation, that we may understand, and be suitably affected with them, as far as they are revealed, with a commission from Christ to publish them, while secret things are still to be left with him, till time shall declare them. Though it cannot but be bitter to the souls of true believers to think of the severe persecutions which the church is to expect under the reign of antichrist; yet what a softening to that grief; what an encouragement to faith and patience; and what a pleasure must it be, to have realizing prospects of the care that Christ will take of them during their tribulations, and of the happy period he will put, in his appointed time, to all their sorrows, when they shall be turned into joy and praise, and his kingdom shall be built up in its purity and glory, with wide extent upon the ruins of all antichristian powers! Then, as the Angel of the covenant swore by the Creator of all worlds, who lives for ever and ever, the mystery of God, relating to his dispensations of providence and grace, shall be finished; and all the prophecies, which are now the objects of the faith and hope of his people, shall be clearly explained, and actually fulfilled, to his glory and their everlasting triumph.

CHAP.

NOTE.

* It is well known to grammarians, *regimen*, it is translated *over* and *upon*, that the preposition (*ἐπὶ*) with a dative as in Luke xv. 7. *over one sinner*, (*ἐπὶ τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ*), as it is here, and rendered *before*, in *αὐτοῦ* and Eph. ii. 20. *upon the foundation*, (*ἐπὶ τῇ θεμελίῳ*); and, in that *foundation*, (*ἐπὶ τῇ θεμελίῳ*).

C H A P. XI.

The first general description of the state of the church for 1260 years, to be dated from the rise of the temporal power of the Pope about the year 756, is represented under the figure of a temple measured, but the outward court of which, as descriptive of formal professors, is left to the Gentiles, or idolatrous church of Rome, for 42 months, 1, 2. During this time of equal date with 1260 prophetic days, or years, two witnesses, or a few, from age to age, prophecy in sackcloth, but with great power, 3,—6. They are slain by popish tyranny, which is figured out under the image of the beast, and are in a manner suppressed for three prophetic days and a half, equal to the 42 months; after which they arise and ascend to heaven, as bearing their testimony with greater efficacy and honour than ever before, unto the overthrow of a tenth part of the Romish jurisdiction, and the slaughter of 7000 men, and to the consecration of the rest of that party, which puts an end to the second wo, 7,—14. ; And under the seventh trumpet, denouncing the third wo, all antichristian-powers would be utterly destroyed, and issue in a glorious state of Christ's kingdom upon earth, 15,—19.

P E R I O D III.

TEXT.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

PARAPHRASE.

THEN, in order to my having a general view of the true state both of the pure and the antichristian-church, methought, a reed was put into my hand, answering to the measuring rod, and line, which the prophets, *Ezekiel* and *Zechariah*, saw in vision for measuring the temple and *Jerusalem*, (*Ezek. xl. 3,—5.* and *Zech. ii. 1, 2.*) And the Angel of the covenant, who had given me the open little book, (*chap. x. 8, &c.*) standing near, said unto me, Arise, and with this rod, which is a proper emblem of the holy scripture, as the rule by which all persons, doctrines, and practices are to be tried, (*Isa. viii. 20.* and *Gal. vi. 16.*) take the just dimensions of the true gospel-church, which is now the temple of God, as his habitation through the Spirit: (*1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.* and *2 Cor. vi. 16.* and *Eph. ii. 21, 22.*) Measure likewise the altar, at which they, as a spiritual house and holy priesthood, offer up spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise, acceptable to God by *Jesus Christ*: (*1 Pet. ii. 5.*) And he further ordered me to take an exact account of those of the visible church, who worship God in spirit and truth, through Christ as their altar, according to gospel institution.

³ But the court which is without the

² But though the whole temple at *Jerusalem* was measured, because all its parts were to be entirely rebuilt;

the temple, leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

built; yet, said the Angel unto me (alluding to the outward court of that temple, (*Ezek. xl. 17.*) where all *Israel* worshipped promiscuously) You shall not take in the whole of the visible church in your measurement; but shall leave out such as do not agree to this rule: Thereby intimating, that formal professors, who answer to outward court-worshippers, should not be reckoned to the true church of Christ, as being rejected of him: For, said he, that part of the visible church is permitted, by the righteous judgment of God, to fall under the power of antichristian *Rome*; which might fitly be styled the *Gentiles*, as their idolatrous worship of saints, angels, and images, would resemble the demon-worship of the heathens, and as many others of their religious services would be derived from, and symbolize with them: And these *Gentilizing* Christians, as he further added, shall not only trample upon, oppress, and persecute the pure church, but also exercise a tyrannical dominion over all professors of the Christian name, even as it was foretold that *Jerusalem* itself, the once holy city, should be broken down of the *Gentiles*: (*Luke xxi. 24.* see the note there) And the continuance of their power shall be for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years; * which, in the style of prophecy, are denoted by forty and two months, reckoning each month at thirty days, and each day for a year. (See the note on chap. x. 6.)

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days clothed in sackcloth.

3 But, notwithstanding all the degeneracy and oppressions of the Romish church, I will raise up, give commission and authority to, and powerfully preserve and assist a competent, though small number of faithful servants, to bear an honourable witness to my name and gospel, and the purity of my institutions, in their preaching, holy profession, and conversation, and to remonstrate against the idolatry and other gross corruptions

N O T E

* This 1260 years, as Mr. *Louman* has observed, and I think shewn with strong probability in his *Preface*, and in the *Contents* of this third period, "is not to begin till the imperial government of *Rome* was passed away, as the preceding forms of government were before it, till another form of government should be established in *Rome*, which, on some accounts, should be called the *seventh*, and other accounts the *eighth* form of government: when *Rome*, once the powerful mistress of the world, after she had lost her dominion, and seemed to lose it without hope of recovery, should be restored to power and empire again, which was to continue during the 1260 days of this

period, and then to be utterly overthrown, and never to rise again."

"Now, (says he) as a great variety of concurring circumstances shew the beginning of this period about the year 756, when the Popes were invested with the temporal dominion of *Rome*, in which only time, the several descriptions do all exactly agree; the 1260 days of this prophecy are to last so long as this power is to continue: Which seems evidently to shew, that we are not to understand 1260 *natural* days, the time of this period, but so many *prophetic* days, in which a day is given for a year."

ruptions of that apostate church, in a succession of them from age to age; * which may be called *two witnesses*, with reference to the validity of their testimony to establish the truth of what they declare; (see *Deut.* xvii. 6. and xix. 15. *Matth.* xviii. 16. and *2 Cor.* xiii. 1.) and with an allusion to some famous pairs of prophets in former days: And these shall continue to bear a noble testimony to me and my cause through the whole term of antichrist's reign, which will be twelve hundred and sixty days, reckoning each day for a year; and so will be exactly the same period, but now signified (*ver.* 2.) by *forty and two months*. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.) In all which time, as the ancient prophets and people of God used to wear sackcloth, in token of mourning and lamentation, in the days of *Israel's* affliction; so, in allusion therunto, these faithful servants shall bravely maintain their testimony in circumstances as distressed and perilous, and with hearts as deeply affected at the low and degenerate state of religion, and at the afflictive condition of the people of God under the power of persecutions, as though they were to manifest it by clothing themselves with sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

4 These, how much soever they may be despised and oppressed by the apostate church, are in high honour and esteem with God; and as *Zerubbabel* and *Josua* the high priest were compared to *two olive trees*, that fed the lamps of the temple with oil, on account of their employing all their wisdom, gifts, and graces, with which they were richly furnished, for rebuilding the temple, and re-establishing the worship of God in it, under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord; (*Zeck.* iv. 6,—14.) so these witnesses in sackcloth, shall be continually supplied with the light and assistances of the Spirit to enable them, amidst all their trials, to minister the pure uncorrupted gospel, for the edification and comfort of the church, and for holding forth the light of truth and holiness to the world, like candles set on candlesticks, (*Matth.* v. 14,—16.)

N O T E

* These *two witnesses* mean, not any two particular persons, but a succession of faithful ministers: For their *prophecy* or *preaching* in sackcloth was to last 1260 years; and their being spoken of, as *two*, may well be considered with respect to the sufficiency of their witness-bearing, and in allusion to *Moses*, and *Aaron*, the deliverers of the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and revivers of the worship of God among them; to *Elijah* and *Elisha*, the restorers of his worship from *Baal's* idolatry; and to *Zerubbabel* and *Josua*, the rebuilders of the temple; all which persons seem to be referred to, *ver.* 4, 5, 6. And, perhaps, it may point to some remarkable pairs of witnesses against popish corruptions, that should arise in a succession of them, during this period; such as the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*; *John Huss* and *Jerom of Prague*; *Luther* and *Calvin*, and the like.

as becomes servants standing in the presence of the sovereign Lord of the whole earth, to minister before him, with a consciousness of his observing them, and with an humble dependence on him for protection, assistance, and success.

And if any, through inveterate prejudices against them and their doctrine, shall set themselves to injure and distress them, and put an end to their testimony, as *Aboziab* did in the case of *Elijah*, when to seize him, he sent two companies of soldiers, which were consumed by fire from heaven, in answer to his prayer, and in vindication of his righteous cause; (*2 Kings* i. 10,—12.) the word of the Lord, in the mouth of these two faithful witnesses, shall be like fire to devour their enemies, (*Jer.* v. 12, 14.) as God will hear their prayers under oppression, and will certainly avenge them, in due season, by executing the just judgments they shall denounce in their ministry, by his authority, against their antichristian persecutors: And if, notwithstanding all the solemn warnings that shall be given, they will still persist in abusing them and obstructing their good work, they shall sooner or later, in the manner but now mentioned, find the dreadful effects of it to their own destruction; which is repeated, like the doubling of *Pharaoh's* dream, because the thing is certain. (*Gen.* xli. 32.)

6 As the prophet *Elijah* had power with God by prayer, in a time of drought and famine, to stop the bottles of heaven, according to his prediction, that rain might not descend for the space of three years and six months to make the earth fruitful; (*1 Kings* xvii. 1. and *Jam.* v. 17.) and as *Moses* and *Aaron* received authority from God to turn the waters of *Egypt* into blood; (*Exod.* vii. 17.) and to inflict any other plague on that oppressive and persecuting people, which a divine order directed them to: So these witness-bearing servants were represented to me, as being so dear to God, and having such an interest in him by the prayer of faith, as, during the course of their prophesying, to denounce against, and bring down upon their cruel antichristian enemies, such terrible punishments of a temporal and spiritual nature, whether by war or famine, or withholding the rain of his word, Spirit, and providential bounties, as often as he sees fit to order them to denounce either of those judgments against the subjects of the Romish dominion: And this he authorised them to do, with effect upon them, for their obstinate wickedness, not from a spirit of private revenge, but for the vindication of his own honour, and of the faithfulness and importance of their testimony.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

7 And during the time of their witness-bearing, till they shall have finished their testimony in sackcloth, to Christ and his gospel, and against all antichristian errors in doctrine and worship, through the forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty years, the papal tyranny, or grand antichrist, which was represented to me under the figure of a wild beast, (*1st Inq.* see also *chap.* xiii. 1, and xvii. 8.) the same that was foretold by the fourth beast in Daniel's prophecy, (*chap.* vii. 23,—25.) and derives his power from Satan, like one that rises up from the horrid unfathomable abyss of hell: This cruel beast, *whose coming will be after the working of Satan*, (*2 Thess.* ii. 9.) will make a furious opposition to my witnesses, and will be suffered to prevail, by stratagem and violence, for a time, against them, and deprive them of their civil and religious liberties, and make great slaughter of them *.

8 And

NOTE.

* Many learned expositors understand this *slaying of the witnesses*, to relate to some more than commonly severe persecutions of the church, for three prophetic days or years and a half, (*ver.* 9.) toward the close of the 1260 years of antichrist's reign, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. But they are much divided in their conjectures about the time of this event, whether it be already past, or yet to come. They, who suppose it to be already past, refer it to very different instances of severe persecutions, which continued only three years and a half. Some carry it so far back, as to the council of Constance, about the year 1414, when John Huss and Jerome of Prague were put to death: others refer it to the Smalcaldic war in Germany, about 1547; others, to the Popish persecution in Queen Mary's days in England, about the year 1553; others, to the massacre of the Protestants in France, 1572; and others, to the cruelties exercised on the Vaudais in Piedmont, under the Duke of Savoy, about 1693: All which remarkable persecutions lasted about *three years and a half*. And several of these expositors suppose, though not very consistently with their own schemes, that the *resurrection of the witnesses* was at the time of the Protestant Reformation; whereas most of the facts, to which they apply the *slaying of the witnesses*, were after the Reformation commenced: Others of them, who also take the three days and a half (*ver.* 9.) to signify in prophetic style

three years and a half, think, that the *slaying of the witnesses*, and consequently their *rising and ascending* is still to come toward the close of the 1260 years, or 42 months of their prophesying in sackcloth: For they apprehend that the witnesses are not yet risen, and advanced to so great power and honour as is signified by their *standing on their feet and ascending up to heaven*; and that no such blow has hitherto been given to Popery, as is represented to be the immediate consequence of their *rising and ascending*. All this shews the extreme uncertainty that attends every guess about the *slaying, rising, and ascending* of the witnesses, upon the foot of understanding, the *three days and a half* to mean only *three years and a half*. But all these controversies about it are effectually superseded, if (as seems to me most likely) we resolve the three days and a half into prophetic days or years, and then the three years and a half into an agreement with the time, and time, and half a time, in this book, (*chap.* xii. 14.) and in Daniel's prophecy, (*chap.* xii. 6, 7.) and so make them equal to the prophetic 42 months and 1260 days. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.) This makes the general descriptions of this period entirely uniform: And the words *when they shall have finished their testimony* (*εως μαρτυριας*) may, according to the latitude of the tense and particle, signify, *while they are*, or *shall be performing their testimony*. For (*εως*) when sometimes signifies *while*, as in *Matth.* xxiv. 32: and

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

8 And as it is the highest instance of merciless barbarity, to deny dead bodies a burial, and leave them shamefully exposed in public places of concourse; so, to shew the most malignant inhumanity and indignity against these witnesses, they will not only be slain, in a political, and many of them in a literal sense; but will be exposed to open contempt and ignominy in the popish dominion, which is of large extent, and has for its capital the great city of *Rome*; (chap. xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10.—16, 18, 21.) which in a mystical sense may be called *Sodom*, for its pride, filthiness, and wickedness, and *Egypt*, for its tyranny, oppression, and idolatry; and may be compared to *Jerusalem*, which killed the prophets, and, when under the *Roman* jurisdiction, put our blessed Lord to the shameful and painful death of the cross, and afterward crucified him afresh in the martyrdom of his members, which will be acted over again by these cruel persecutors.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, shall see their dead bodies, three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

9 And this will be counted such a triumph of the antichristian power over the saints,* that the subjects of its dominion, wheresoever they dwell, in different countries of various tribes, languages, and nations, will barbarously insult over them, as seeing them exposed, with as much ingnominy, abhorrence, and inhumanity, as though they were loathsome carcases kept above ground, and not suffered to be decently interred, during the period of their prophesying in sackcloth, which may be called three days and a half, in allusion to the time that unburied dead bodies may ordinarily be kept, without offensive putrefaction, and which in prophetic style is answerable to a *time, times, and half a time*, another prophetic number, parallel to *forty and two months*, or *twelve hundred and sixty days*. (See the note on ver. 7.)

10 And they that dwell upon the

10 And the inhabitants of the papal territories will be mightily pleased at the inhuman treatment of the

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and finished is rendered performed, he put in graves, understand their kind Luke ii. 39.—But if, as some suppose, Protestant friends, who would not suffer the words may be rendered, *When they shall be about to finish their testimony*, or toward the close of the period for the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which apprehend is not yet expired, then this laying them must still be to come. And it seems not improbable but that the last efforts of antichristian powers may be the most terrible and prevalent of all that have gone before it since the Reformation.

* Some by the people, that should see their dead bodies, and not suffer them to

Protestant friends, who would not suffer them to be buried, in hopes of their reviving again. But it seems more suitable to the following verse, and the whole tenor of this general description of the mournful state of the witnesses, while prophesying in sackcloth, to understand it as meaning their barbarous popish enemies: And yet it must be owned, that the other sense suggests great encouragement to the church under all their suffering circumstances, on supposition that it is to be confined to times after the Reformation.

the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

the slain witnesses; and, as though the day were now absolutely their own, will congratulate one another, and go into all sorts of merriment and feasting, and *sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor*, as if, like the day of the Jews' deliverance from their enemies, (*Esth. ix. 22.*) this were to be observed as a time of thanksgiving to God; because they had brought down the faithful monitors, that filled the subjects of the antichristian empire with intolerable vexation, by testifying both openly and practically, by preaching and example, against their abominable corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners; and by denouncing the judgments of God, which would come upon them, on that account.

11 And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entered into them; and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

11 But in vain will they imagine themselves secure from being ever troubled again with a revival of the cause, which they thought was so thoroughly suppressed, as to be past all likelihood of recovery: For, after the expiration of the above-mentioned period, which, though consisting of twelve hundred and sixty years, may, in a way of computing prophetic numbers, be expressed, as it has been but now, (*ver. 9.*) by three days and an half, (see the note on *ver. 7.*) Methought I saw the quickning Spirit, which, proceeding from God, entered into, raised up, and animated a succession of faithful witnesses to this same glorious cause, of the same principles and temper with those that had gone before them, as *John the Baptist* came in the spirit and power of *Elijah*, and for that reason bore his name: (*Luke i. 17.* and *Math. xi. 14.* and *xvii. 11, 12.*) And they stood with strength, courage, and vigour, on their feet, like persons raised in full health from the dead, and ready to engage in any service that God should call them to, as *Israel's* restoration was represented in *Ezekiel's* vision under the figure of a *resurrection* of dry bones, and of their standing upon their feet. (*Chap. xxxiii. 1,—10.*) And, at their enemies seeing this unexpected wonderful alteration, they were terribly afraid of being tormented by these witnesses, more than ever before.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

12 And for the further encouragement of these risen witnesses, methought, I heard a loud voice call to them from heaven, the throne of God's glory, saying, Come up hither; by which was signified, that God would visibly take them into his special protection, and would assist, own, and honour them with great success in his work and cause: And thereupon, methought, in allusion to Christ's visible ascension to heaven in a cloud after his resurrection from the dead, they ascended up to heaven in the midst of a bright cloud,

cloud, to signify God's exalting them to eminent dignity, power, and prosperity, according to the metaphorical sense, in which the scripture uses such terms; (*Isa. xvi. 13.* and *Maib. xi. 23.*) and their enemies could not but see what a glorious change was made in their circumstances, and what a signal testimony of favour and honour God had therein given to them.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

13 And, at the very same time, there were strong convulsions and confusions in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the antichristian nations, which were represented under the emblem of a great earthquake, like that which attended the resurrection of our Lord; (*Maib. xxviii. 2.*) and by means thereof a very considerable body, which may be called a tenth part of the papal jurisdiction, fell off from it *. And, in the midst of these commotions, a great number of their party, like seven thousand men of name, power, and influence, (*εξακισήκοντες*) together with their dependents, fell in battle: And the remainder of them were astonished and terrified, and forced to own, to the glory of the only true God, whose throne is established in heaven, that there was an extraordinary appearance of his power and providence in favour of his church, and against his popish enemies: and by means of preaching the gospel, in concurrence with his Spirit and his amazing providence, they were converted from superstition and idolatry, to the glory of God, in an acknowledgment of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

14 The second wo is past, and behold, the third wo cometh quick-

14 This brings us to the end of the *second* great wo, that had been threatned by the *sixth* angel: (*chap. ix. 13. &c.*) And observe, with attention and reverend awe, the *third* and *last* wo will be immediately denounced by the *seventh* angel.

15 And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great

TRUMPET VII. being the } 15 Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, which was to be followed with effusions of the

NOTE.

* The account given in the paraphrase of the *tenth part of the city*, and *seven thousand men*, as meaning a considerable part of the *Romish jurisdiction* and *principal men* in it, appears to me probable, as any of the numerous conjectures that have been made about it. Some fix upon one, and others upon another of the ten kingdoms, into which the Western empire was divided, after it became antichristian. But, as far I see, we must wait for the event to determine it, since this part of the general view of the prophecy seems to be not yet fulfilled: And the same may be said with respect to the sentiments of others, who think that by the *tenth part of the city*, is

meant *Rome* itself, which is now but a tenth part of what it was at the time of this prophecy. But be these guesses as they will, I take the tenth part of the city's falling, and seven thousand being slain, to signify some very great downfall of popish powers, that is immediately to succeed the 1260 years of the beast's reign, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and to be completed by the pouring out of the seven vials under the *seventh trumpet*: (*chap. xvi.*) For the numbers *seven* and *ten* are often used to signify *many*, as in *Job. v. 19. Psal. lxxix. 12. Luke xvii. 4. Gen. xxxi. 7. 1 Sam. i. 8. and Eccles. vii. 19.*

great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

the *seven vials*, (chap. xvi.) that would bring about the entire ruin of the antichristian state of *Rome*; and, immediately upon this notice of it, there were loud acclamations of joy and praise among the witnesses that ascended up to heaven, (*ver. 12.*) saying, Now the long-looked for, and earnestly desired time is come, in which all the kingdoms of this world, and particularly those that had been under antichrist's dominion before, are brought into a spiritual, cheerful, and holy subjection, as nations devoted to God and to his Messiah; they being made a willing people in the day of his power: And he, who has set up his throne in great glory among them, shall rule over them by his word, Spirit, providence, and sceptre of righteousness, as their King; and he shall reign in this manner upon earth, till the utmost period of this glorious dispensation, and afterwards under a different form, in heaven, together with his Father and Spirit, to all eternity.

16 And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God.

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

16, 17 And, upon hearing these glad tidings of great joy, the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, which were seated with honour, dignity, and delight on their thrones in the immediate presence of God, (*chap. iv. 4.*) rose from their seats, and, prostrating themselves with deep humility and reverence, paid their solemn adorations to God the Son together with the Father, * saying, We bless thy holy and glorious name, and pay our cheerful and grateful acknowledgments to thee, O thou eternal and mighty Jehovah, the sovereign Lord of all, and, together with thy Father, the only true God, (see the notes on *chap. i. 4, 8.*) who from everlasting to everlasting art unchangeably the same in thy being and perfections, counsels, appointments, and covenant, O God; and art *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, as Mediator; (*Heb. xiii. 8.*) We solemnly adore and praise thee; because thou hast now openly assumed and asserted thy natural and office-right and authority, to exercise universal dominion for the good of thy church; and hast reigned, by thy providential dispensations, with great power and righteousness over all thine enemies; and, by thy grace, over all thy people in the most conspicuous, effectual, and extensive manner.

18 And

NOTE.

* I think that all the following descriptions of the divine Person here spoken of, may, in an especial manner, point out to us the Lord Christ, as most immediately intended in this ascription of glory, though not to the exclusion of the eternal Father, to whom, together

with the Son, the kingdoms of this world will be brought into subjection, when Christ shall take to himself his great power and reign; which seems most evidently to be spoken of, by way of eminence, as the time of his glorious kingdom upon the earth.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is kindled, and the time of the dead is judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and thou shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

18 And we bless thy divine majesty, that though the nations, which were subject to antichristian-powers, were enraged against, and cruelly persecuted thy witnesses, and were filled with indignation at thy appearing for their rescue; yet their glorious cause is now judged; thy righteous vengeance is executed upon those that oppressed them, and repented not of their evil deeds; and thy appointed time, the set-time for favouring Sion, is now come, that thou shouldst avenge the quarrel of thy covenant in reviving, owning, and honouring those, who in a civil sense were dead, and in vindicating the characters of thy holy martyrs who were faithful unto death; and that thou shouldst bestow gracious rewards of full liberty, peace and prosperity, in the enjoyment of all gospel-ordinances and privileges, upon thy ministering servants, who in their own persons, or in their predecessors, or both, made known thy will, and preached thy pure gospel, in mournful circumstances, at the peril of their lives; and not upon them only but upon all thy people whom thou hast set apart and sanctified for thyself, and who worship thee with a reverential fear of thy holy name, whether they be weaker or stronger believers, or persons of lower or higher rank and station in the church, or in the world; and that thou shouldst render tribulation to those antichristian-enemies, who troubled them; and bring utter destruction upon those, who in their day, by false doctrine, fraud, and violence, corrupted, plundered, and destroyed the inhabitants of the earth.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen his temple, the holy of holies, and there were lightnings, and voices, and roarings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

19 And as the temple at Jerusalem, which was the seat of public worship, and a type of the New Testament-church, appeared in all its glory, when the veil was turned aside to give an open view of the holy of holies, and of the ark of the covenant, with the mercy-seat and cherubim upon it, which were emblems of the divine presence; so I had a vision of the temple, and all things in it, as exposed to my sight, without the interposition of a veil, to intimate the exceeding light, liberty, and glory, with which God's spiritual temple, his church on earth, should appear in this happy state of it: And this glorious revolution was represented to me, as attended with such heavy and destructive judgments upon the enemies of Christ and his church, as may fitly be compared to the most terrible tempests of lightning, and roarings in the air, and claps of thunder; and to the shocks, overthrows, and ruins of a universal earthquake, and storms of prodigious hail-stones, as if the dissolution of all things were at hand.

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How certainly may we conclude, that the wickedness of the wicked shall have an end, and that God will establish the just! When he appropriates a peculiar people to himself, according to the rule of his word, he will separate the precious from the vile, and make no account of carnal professors, whom he will leave to the power of antichristian enemies: But he will always have a seed to serve him, and bear witness to him and his gospel, though in mournful circumstances, like persons clothed in sackcloth, through the whole period of popish tyranny, superstition, and idolatry, which was to last twelve hundred and sixty years. His faithful witnesses, shall, nevertheless, stand all that while with acceptance before him, and be the means of conveying light and influence in the true church of Christ: But woe to those who, like antichristian *Rome*, (which may well be compared to *Sodom* and *Egypt* for wickedness, persecution, and idolatry) set themselves against these witnesses, to oppress, silence, and slay them. God will take their part, and bring down heavy vengeance upon the heads of all their enemies: And though he may suffer them, for an appointed season, to be *politically*, and some of their number *corporally* slain, and their cause to be in great measure suppressed, by the beast which rose out of the bottomless pit; and to be treated with inhumanity and indignity under the jurisdiction of *Rome*, and insulted with mirth and triumph by multitudes of that party, which could not tell how to bear the stinging admonition and reproof of their holy doctrines, examples, prayers, and threatnings of divine judgments; they shall have a rising, ascending, and flourishing state of security and honour, by the power of God's Spirit, and the workings of his providence, to their own exceeding joy, and to the envy and vexation of their enemies. And ah! How will many of their persecutors be then affrighted at the thought of what they have done against the faithful servants of the Lord, and at the desolation then coming upon themselves! Happy will it be for those, whose fright shall end in a thorough conversion, and in giving glory to God: And O what a blessed time will that be, when the power of popery shall be totally reduced, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ! Then the glorious privileges of the gospel-church shall open in light and liberty, purity and peace, in delightful communion with God, and in holiness of heart and life; and then their Lord and Saviour, who is the eternal and almighty God, together with the Father, will vindicate their righteous cause, and bountifully reward his suffering servants with the smiles of providence and grace; and will pour destruction upon all antichristian powers at the end of their twelve hundred and sixty years reign, who have been the plague of the earth: And this he will do by methods as terrible as the most shocking tempests of thunder, lightning, hail, and earthquakes, can possibly figure out to us. The hope of this complete deliverance of the church is their support and comfort in all preceding tribulations; and when Christ shall take to himself his great power and reign, to the entire destruction of his enemies, and happiness of them that love and fear him, then all his people on earth will join the heavenly chorus in animated thanksgivings and praises to him, who shall reign for ever and ever.

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C H A P. XII.

A second general description of the same period of the church of Christ, and of the Popish empire, under the figures of a woman driven into the wilderness, but preserved in safety there, and of a great red dragon, meaning the devil, as exerting his power principally by the Pope and his party, who would persecute her 1260 prophetic days or years, 1,—6. Michael and his angels fight against the devil and his angels, who are defeated; upon which there are loud acclamations of joy and praise, attended with a denunciation of wo to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the devil's or dragon's rage, 7,—12. Hereupon the dragon persecutes the church, which is hid from him, and is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, answering to 1260 prophetic days, 13, 14. He endeavours to destroy her, as by a flood which is swallowed up by some civil powers, styled the earth; and, being thus disappointed, he renews his war against the remnant of her seed, 15,—17.

TEXT.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

PARAPHRASE.

AND in another general view which was given me of the state of the church, and of its antichristian-enemies, for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years, there was represented to me a very remarkable significant figure (*enigme*) in heaven, * portending great events: Which was of a woman most gloriously adorned, a fit emblem of Christ's church or spouse, as highly honoured of God: She appeared as surrounded with rays of illustrious brightness, like the sun; which may signify her having put on Christ and his righteousness, and being irradiated with the light of truth, comfort, and holiness, as derived from *the Sun of righteousness, which arose upon her, with healing in his wings*: (Malac. iv. 2.) And the moon was represented as placed under her feet; Which may be considered as an emblem of her elevation above the obscure light of Mosaic rites and ceremonies, and of her trampling, with holy indifference and contempt, upon all the enjoyments of this world, both of which are as changeable and deficient as the moon, that has no light but what it borrows from the sun. And there was the appearance of a crown upon her head, bespangled with twelve bright stars, instead of so many brilliant diamonds, to intimate, that all her light of knowledge and grace was communicated, as

NOTE.

* By *heaven* some understand the place where the apostle had his vision; others, *the air*; others, *the church*, which is the *kingdom of heaven on earth*. But, being uncertain in which of these senses it is to be taken, the paraphrase leaves it undetermined.

a crown of glory to her, by means of, and according to the doctrine of the twelve apostles.

2 And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

2 And, methought, this wonderfully remarkable woman, appearing to be big with child, cried out, as in the throws and pangs of a woman in labour, just ready, and earnestly longing, to be delivered; * which in figurative language, (*Isa.* liv. 1. and lxvi. 7, 8, 9.) signifies the strong groanings, eager desires, wrestling prayers, and indefatigable labours of the church, under sharp persecutions, for a numerous offspring of converts, that *Christ*, in his doctrine and image, might be formed in them, (*Gal.* iv. 19.) and they might be born of God. (*1 John* v. 1, 4.)

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

3 And while the woman was in travail, I saw, in my vision, another significant sign of a contrary nature in heaven: (see the note on *ver.* 1.) And, behold! with wonder and amazement, it was the figure of a great red dragon, which represented the devil, (*ver.* 9.) as a powerful, cruel, and savage adversary, all over stained with the blood of martyrs, especially by popish instruments, to whom *he gave his power*: (*chap.* xiii. 2.) Accordingly the dragon, as acting in and by them, was represented to me under the form of a strange monster, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; by which may be signified the Pope, as invested with temporal, as well as spiritual empire, whose seat would be at *Rome*, which stands upon seven mountains; and whose dominion would be the seventh form of supreme government; (*chap.* xvii. 9,—12.) † and who would have

NOTES.

* Being with child and travailing in birth, are beautiful figures, by which the church is represented in Scripture, as bringing forth a spiritual offspring: Accordingly *Jerusalem* is called the mother of us all; and, with a prophetic view to the glory of the gospel church, *Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her*, &c. (*Psal.* lxxxvii. 5, 6.) and, as soon as *Zion* travailed, she brought forth her children. (*Isa.* lxvi. 8.)

† The description of this great red dragon is so near a kin to that which is given of the beast, *chap.* xiii. 1. and xvii. 9,—11. that one would think we could not easily miss of seeing the same power to be intended by both. (See the note on *chap.* xi. 2.) There is only one difference in these figurative representations of the dragon, and the beast, *chap.* xiii. 1. The dragon here appeared with seven crowns on his seven heads, and

the beast there with ten on his ten horns. Perhaps, the reason of that variation may be, because while the heathen *Roman* empire subsisted, and, as such, persecuted the church, *Rome* alone had the imperial dignity, and the ten kingdoms were only provinces under her. But, when the empire became antichristian, those provinces were formed into distinct kingdoms; and so are represented as crowned, though still in a dependence on the Pope, *chap.* xvii. 9,—13. However, as the crowns and horns in both are emblems of royal dignity and power; and as seven is a number of perfection, and all the heads were crowned, the general meaning of the symbols is the same: But whatever difficulty there may be, in assigning any particular reason of this difference in the figurative representations, (which is of no great importance, while the general view is the same) all the heads being crowned is a considerable

a powerful rule, of which horns are an emblem, over the ten kingdoms into which the *Roman* empire would before that time be divided; and would exercise royal authority with great extent; the emblem of which are seven crowns set on these seven heads, to denote that all the power of the former governments of *Rome* would center in him.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

4 And by means of his agents and followers, persecutions and corrupt doctrines, which for their power and malignity, may be compared to a great dragon's tail, this monster swept away a considerable number of ecclesiastical sons from their spiritual stations in the church, drawing them into superstition and idolatry, and throwing them down from a pursuit of heavenly views to an attachment to earthly things; such as the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world. And while the church was labouring with great difficulty and earnest desire, like a woman in travail, to propagate pure and undefiled religion, and make sincere converts to Christ, the furious dragon, who, as a *roaring lion*, walks about, seeking whom he may devour, (1 Pet. v. 8.) narrowly watched her, like one standing just before her, to see when she should bring forth her beloved offspring, that he might immediately tear it in pieces, as soon as ever it should be born into the world: Which may be considered as a lively figure of the implacable and powerful opposition of Satan, and of those that are under his influence, against the kingdom and gospel of Christ, to prevent their progress in the earth.

9 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was

5 And yet, according to the painful, laborious, and hopeful desires of the church, she brought forth a seed to serve Christ; which in prophetic style may be called her being *delivered of a man-child*; (Isa. vi. 7, 8.) * as a *succession* of faithful believers should

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considerable objection against the common interpretation of the seven heads, as relating to the *seven forms of government*, that should succeed one another in the *Roman* empire; such as *kings*, *consuls*, *dictators*, *tribunes*, *decemvirs*, *emperors*, and *popes*: For I cannot find that the *consuls*, *dictators*, *tribunes*, and *decemvirs*, though supreme magistrates, were ever *crowned*; whereas our prophecy expressly exhibits *all* the seven heads as alike crowned; and the papal head over them may be considered as a seventh form of supreme government. (See the note on chap. xvii. 9.)

* By the *man-child*, which the church brought forth, interpreters generally un-

derstand *Constantine* the Great, who was exalted to the imperial throne, established Christianity, and ruled all nations with a rod of iron, unto the subduing of heathen persecution and idolatry, and utterly overthrowing the devil's tyranny, together with the idolatrous priests and persecutors among the *Pagans*. And, I confess, there seems to be something so natural in this, and in a correspondent interpretation of ver. 7, 8. that I should strongly incline to go into it, were it not that I cannot but take this, as well as the 11th and 13th chapters, to be a general representation of the state of the church, during the 1260 years of her being in the wilderness, and of anti-christ's

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to God, and so his
throne.

be thereby propagated in the church, in spite of all the malicious designs and attempts of the devil and his instruments; insomuch that, instead of its being utterly extirpated from the earth, it should finally prevail, under Christ its head, to break to pieces all the powers of its enemies, and rule over them with invincible strength and firmness, as with an iron-sceptre: And, in the mean while, this lovely birth was taken under the immediate care and protection of God for its preservation, like one raised above the reach of its most powerful and inveterate enemies, and lodged secretly as it were, before his throne in heaven; as *Joash* was hid in the temple of the Lord six years, that the idolatrous *Ataliab* might not murder him. (2 Chron. xxiii. 11, 12. and xxiii. 11.—13.)

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days.

6 And the church herself, signified by the parent woman, (ver. 1, 2.) was taken effectual care of, as well as those that were born to God in her, whom the Highest himself would establish, (Pl. lxxxvii. 5, 6.) and the gates of hell should not prevail against; (Matth. xvi. 18.) though, in order to her preservation, she was forced to retire into obscurity, as into a wild and solitary desert, exposed to many difficulties and dangers, as *Israel* were in the wilderness, where God by his kind providence had prepared a place of retreat and refreshment for them; that as he there fed them with *manna*; so his ministering servants should feed her with knowledge and understanding, as *pastors* according to his own heart; (Jer. iii. 15.) for the whole space of his witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, which was to be twelve hundred and sixty years. (See the notes on chap. x. 6. and xi. 3.)

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael

7 And a further representation was made to me of the state of the church, during this period, under the emblem

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christ's reign. (See the notes on chap. x. 6. and xi. 7.) But as upon every scheme, except that of *Grotius* and *Flammond*, (which evidently gives by far too short a time for the numerous events assigned to this period) all Protestants must allow that *Constantine's* reign was long before this period commenced; and as the prophetic language is all figurative, it seems requisite, for making the general compendious view in this and the preceding and following chapters uniform, to give those figurative representations such a turn as may best comport with the events that were to come to pass in the time marked out by the prophecy itself, relating to the 1260 years, or time, times, and half a time, of the

church's being in the wilderness, ver. 6. 14. Otherwise, I cannot conceive why these numbers are mentioned in this chapter at all; nor why the dragon is represented as having ten horns, and seven heads and crowns, ver. 3. (See the note there). I have therefore fixed upon such an application of events in this chapter as is entirely consistent with the two other general views of this period, that are given in the two chapters between which this stands. And though, as far as I know, my thoughts upon it may be in great measure singular; yet they lie easy before my mind, and are humbly submitted to the judgment of the reader.

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon and the dragon fought and his angels.

emblem of a terrible war figured out by one in the air; wherein *Michael*, the sovereign prince, lord, and head of the angels, (*Dan. xii. 1.* and *Jude*, ver. 9.) and his servants, whether ministering spirits, or gospel-preachers, engaged in battle against the great dragon or the devil; and this furious enemy exerted all his power at the head of, and in conjunction with, his demons in hell, and his emissaries, false teachers, and their followers on earth, in opposition to them.

And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

8 And the issue of the combat was, that the dragon and his forces could not carry their point for destroying them; so far from it, that they were absolutely defeated in that design, and lost all their authority in the true church of Christ, as being overcome by their faith and patience, and by the breakings out of the light of the gospel; which might point to the *Protestant-reformation*, when the gospel had a wonderful spread, and several states and kingdoms threw off the antichristian yoke.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

9 And the great dragon himself, at the head of his formidable army, was turned out of the dominion which he before had assumed over those vassals that were now delivered out of his kingdom, who, as long ago as the fall of the human race, beguiled *Eve*, through his subtilty, under the form of a serpent; (*Gen. iii. 4.* and *2 Cor. xi. 3.*) who is often called in scripture *the devil*, and, according to the signification of that word, is a malicious and false *accuser of the brethren*, (ver. 10.) and is properly styled *Satan*, who, as that name signifies, is an inveterate and implacable adversary to them; and by his serpentine craft, betrays the carnal people of all nations into error and idolatry, and every other kind of abominable evil: This malicious and powerful adversary had a great downfall in my vision, like one who tumbles headlong from heaven to earth; and his agents and emissaries, as acting under his influence, were cast down from their former power and authority with him; Thereby intimating that Christ and his church, in the days of the *Reformation*, should prevail against the devil and all his instruments, notwithstanding the subtle and furious opposition that would then be made by

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* In heaven, I here take to mean the *Christ* (who, as many good expositors understand it, is signified by *Michael*) and his people, on one hand; and by *Satan* (Eph. ii. 2.) and the apostle speaks of *spiritual wickedness in high or heavenly places*, (*iniquities*) But 8, 10, may be meant *the church of Christ* this may be considered as emblematical on earth of the combats that are carried on by

by antichristian powers against the reformed religion among them.

10 And I heard a loud voice, saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night,

10 Hereupon, methought, I heard a loud acclamation of melodious thanksgiving, joy, and praise in the heavenly assembly, with which the church on earth chearfully joined, saying, Now is a time of great deliverance to the true church of Christ from its idolatrous and persecuting enemies, and of its prosperity and safety; now has God shewn himself strong on behalf of his people; and now is the gospel-kingdom of our God highly exalted in the light and purity of its doctrines and institutions; and now the power and authority (*agoria*) of his Messiah, as King of kings and Lord of lords, is set up and manifested in great glory: For the devil, that grand adversary of the Christian brethren, is dethroned and defeated in his designs, who sought all opportunities, by his instruments, of laying crimes to their charge, which they were innocent of, to furnish their antichristian enemies with unjust pretences for oppressing them; and who was so insolent as, speaking after the manner of man, unweariedly to bring false accusations of them, on all occasions, by day and night, before our reconciled God, to try whether he could not provoke his wrath against them, as he attempted to do against his servant *Job*, (chaps. i. ii.) and against *Joshua* the high priest. (*Zech. iii. 1.*) For all this signal victory, we exult and triumph, and glorify the name of the Lord.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

11 And we chearfully adore and bless him, in reflection that his saints have gained this glorious conquest over their great adversary, the devil, as working by popish powers; which they have done, not by any strength or wisdom of their own, but merely through faith in the blood of the Lamb, who was slain, and offered up himself an atoning sacrifice for them; and by means of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (*Eph. vi. 17.*) through their steadfast adherence to it, dependence upon it, and open profession of it, in its uncorrupted purity, which they faithfully bore witness to, in their doctrine and conversation: And so bold and upright were they in their holy profession of Christ and his pure gospel, that they valued not their lives, in any comparison with him and his cause; but, like the apostle *Paul*, (*Acts xx. 24.*) they rather chose to expose themselves to death, than deny, renounce, or disown him, and his truths.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in

12 Therefore, as on occasion of the Lord's redeeming and comforting his people, and having mercy on his afflicted, the heavens and the earth were called

them. We to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea: for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

called upon to sing and be joyful; (*Isa.* xlv. 23. and xlix. 13.) so let heaven above, and all the saints and angels that dwell therein, and the whole church on earth, rejoice and triumph with them, (*duc. rurs.*) on account of this happy change in the face of its affairs: But, at the same time, its visible members that dwell on the earth, which consists of land and water, and on the continent and the islands of the sea, and especially such of them as are carnal and earthly-minded under a profession of the true faith, may well tremble on account of the calamities they will yet be exposed to: * For the devil, whose power is not totally destroyed, though much weakened, is come down to distress and pervert you, as much as possible, with the utmost fury and rage; because he finds that his strength is on the declining hand; and that, as he has begun to fall, the time of his doing mischief to the church and cause of Christ shall ere long be brought to its period.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast into the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man-child.

13 Accordingly, when the devil, as exerting his power under the character of the dragon, that appeared with seven heads and crowns upon them, and ten horns, (*ver.* 3.) found himself so greatly baffled by the Protestant-reformation, like one cast down from heaven to earth, (*ver.* 9.) and saw that, in spite of all his endeavours to the contrary, pure Christianity had gained so considerable an ascendancy in various countries, he turned all his malice and power, and raised up a new set of instruments †, against the true

NOTES.

* The paraphrase has given several *saies of the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea*: But, perhaps, what relates to the continent and the islands; and chiefly to the earthly-minded members of the visible church that would be most in danger of falling off by the devil's efforts, may best suit the intention of this part of the prophecy, as pointing to Great Britain and Ireland, and the nations on the continent, which threw off Popery at the Reformation: For the *We to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea*, seems, from what follows in the next verses, to refer to the woman or church of Christ; and the devil's knowing that he had but a short time, is much more directly applicable to the time of the Reformation, than of the downfal of Paganism in the Empire, which has been already about 1400 years ago; and therefore it could scarcely be said then, that the devil knew he had but a short time.

† The Jesuits, the most subtle and active of all the popish emissaries, were

established, as a society, by Ignatius Loyola in the year 1534, soon after the Reformation, which was begun by Luther in the year 1517, and was carried into an open protest against the severe popish decrees at Spire in Germany, by several princes of the Empire in the year 1529, which was the original of the name Protestants, by which the reformed churches are called to this day: And how indefatigable numerous swarms of Jesuits have been in their endeavours to overthrow the Reformation; and what cruelties the Duke of Alva used in the Netherlands, and Queen Mary in England; and how the Council of Trent, the Parisian and Irish massacres, and numberless other efforts of popish princes have been spirited up to suppress and extirpate the Protestant religion, is so familiarly known, as are all the rest of the facts, corresponding to the interpretation given of this chapter, with respect to the time of the Reformation, that it is quite needless to quote particular authorities,

13 And to the woman were given two wings, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place; where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman; that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth,

true church, which had been the mother of so fair and numerous an offspring, and had propagated, as by a man-child, the cause of Christ in a succession of converts from age to age, and more especially at the time of *the Reformation*.

14 And, notwithstanding all these fierce attempts against her, God still took care of her preservation; and as he was said to *bear Israel on eagles wings*, when he brought them out of the land of *Egypt*; (Exod. xix. 4.) so the wonderful strength, speed, and safety, with which he would appear for the church at this season, may be represented by his giving her a pair of eagles wings, that she might flee away from the rage of her enemies, though attended with many difficulties, to her place of retirement, which he had provided, during her wilderness-state, (which was not yet come to its full period) for her escaping the fury and subtilty of that old serpent the devil, and his agents; and for her being refreshed and comforted by his word and Spirit, and the ministrations of his two witnesses, (*chap. xi. 3.* see the note there) to the end of all her trials and afflictions, which under various forms were to last till the expiration of twelve hundred and sixty years; and may be expressed, in the style of the prophet *Daniel*, (*chap. vii. 25.* and *xii. 7.*) by a *time*, or year, two *times* or years, and *half a time* or half a year, which make together twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years. (See the note on *chap. x. 6.*)

15 And this malignant serpent, the devil, (*ver. 9.*) did his utmost to prevent the church's escape to any place of retreat or safety, at the time of *the Reformation*, by pouring out a flood of error and persecution after her, to sink and drown her before she could reach it; which may fitly be represented by a torrent of water poured out of his mouth, that by the force of antichristian errors and enemies, which he raised up against her, he might pervert and ruin her, as by a mighty flood that bears down all before it, which might point to the vigorous attempts of the Jesuits, and others of the popish party, to overwhelm *the Reformation* by craft and power, before it was well established. (See the note on *ver. 13.*)

16 And yet, as great floods of water are swallowed up in caverns of the earth, to prevent the dreadful inundations which they would otherwise have made; so God in his providence inclined the hearts of many

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theories, which may be seen in all the historians of those times; and are almost in every one's hands.

comfort, till the days of their mourning shall be ended: And how certainly shall victory fall on their side, when their warfare shall be accomplished! Christ and his ministering servants, whether angels or men, will take their part against the great dragon and his whole posse of infernal and antichristian instruments; and therefore, in the issue, he will defeat all their forces and throw them down from their tyrannical dominion.—Though the worst of woes may fall on carnal Protestants, Christ will ever have a reserve of a chosen remnant, that shall keep his commandments, and maintain the purity of his doctrines and ordinances; and when they are most exposed to persecuting enemies, the earth shall help the woman; and she herself shall obtain the best of conquests over them, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, and by the light and power of his word and Spirit, even though it should cost many of her children their lives to abide by their testimony to him. O what matter of thanksgiving and praise is this! How should all the saints on earth rejoice and triumph, with the holy angels and spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, for the salvation which is brought to the church in a display of the glory of the kingdom of God and of the power of his Christ! This glory has begun to open in the reformation from popery. But O when shall the twelve hundred and sixty years of her wilderness-state come to its full period? it wears off apace: And when the power of antichrist shall be demolished, He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

C H A P. XIII.

A third general description of the state of the church, during the same period of 1260 years under antichrist's reign, who is represented by the figure of a wild beast rising out of the sea, to whom the dragon gave his power, 11.—10. And another representation is made of the same by the figure of a beast, which had two horns like a lamb, and spoke as a dragon, exercising all the power of the former beast, 11.—15. And obliging all to worship its image, and receive its mark, as persons devoted to it; with an admonition to consider the time of the rise of the beast, in order to our knowing the time of its fall, 16.—18.

TEXT.

AND I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the two preceding summary visions (*chap. xi. and xii.*) relating to the state of the church and its antichristian enemies, for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years, methought, I stood upon the sand of the sea-shore; and there had another vision, relating to the same period, in which was represented a savage wild beast, (*2 Peter*) as an emblem, in prophetic style, of an empire; and this, being the Roman-empire, signified by the fourth and last beast in *Daniel's* vision, (*chap. vii. 2, 3, 7, 8.*) seemed to rise up out of the sea, as an emblem of the tumultuous state of the nations, (*Rev. xvii. 15.*) like the troubled sea in a storm, when the barbarous Goths and Vandals would break in upon the Empire, and it would be divided into ten kingdoms; intimating that out of those commotions this antichristian-power would rise, which appeared under the emblem of seven heads, to signify that the seat of its dominion would

would be at *Rome*, which stands upon seven hills, and that it would be the seventh successive form of supreme government; (*chap. xvii. 9, 10.* see the note there) and under the emblem of *ten horns*, to signify the ten kingdoms that would be united under, and subjected to its power; and *ten crowns*, one upon each horn, to signify the regal authority it would then exercise over all the ten kingdoms; And upon its seven heads were wrote the name of *blasphemy*, and it was full of such names, (*chap. xvii. 3.*) to signify that the power of the seventh form of government would be employed to set up, maintain, and propagate idolatry, in the worshipping of images, and of saints and angels, which is a blasphemous indignity thrown upon the unalienable honour of the only living and true God, and is justly styled *blasphemy* in the writings of the prophets. (*Isa. lxxv. 7.* and *Ezek. xx. 27.*)

2 And, methought, this beast had the appearance of a leopard, only his feet resembled those of a bear; and his mouth was terribly frightful, like the mouth of a ravenous lion; to intimate that all the cruelty, subtilty and power of the three preceeding monarchies, represented in *Daniel's* vision, under these figures, (*chap. vii. 4.—6.*) would be united in this *Roman* papal empire; And the devil, who in my last vision, relating to this period, was represented as exerting his power, by the antichristian-beast under the form of a great red dragon of seven heads and so many crowns, and ten horns, (*chap. xii. 3.* see the note there) was still more distinctly and fully represented in *this*, as conveying all his tyrannical power of civil government to this savage wild beast, and placing him at *Rome*, the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth, (*chap. xvii. 18.*) and which had been the seat of persecuting monarchs of the Empire in its *Pagan* state: And he invested him, whose coming is after the working of *Satan*, with great authority to promote superstition and idolatry, by *all power, and signs, and lying wonders*; (*2 Thess. ii. 9.*) and to persecute the true church of Christ with the utmost severity.

3 And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed; and all the world wondered after the beast.

3 And I perceived that one of the seven forms of government, signified by the seven heads of the beast, was so desperately wounded, as seemed to be past all hope of recovery; to intimate, that the imperial power under the *Roman* Cæsars would be subverted; and yet the wound, to all appearance mortal, was surprisingly healed; which may be considered as referring to the erection of the imperial government under the Pope at *Rome*, from whence the supreme authority of the Empire had been entirely removed, during the exarchate

exarchate of *Ravenna*, without any human prospect of *Rome's* ever being restored to its ancient dignity again: (see the note on *chap. viii. 12.*) And upon this before unexpected and unlikely revival of the power of *Rome* under the temporal dominion of the Pope, all the nations of the Empire were astonished at it; and ran with veneration and delight after the beast, as people used to do after a strange and grand sight, full of wonder at his amazing rise and power, riches, honour, and grandeur. (*Chap. xvii. 8.*)

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

4 And the generality of them paid not only civil, but idolatrous worship, in effect, and by just construction, to the devil himself, who before had been represented, as exerting his tyrannical power, by antichrist, under the form of *the great red dragon*, (see the note on *chap. xii. 3.*) and had now consigned it over to him, under the form of *the beast*, to whom, and to whose arbitrary and idolatrous injunctions and decrees, they readily submitted and yielded implicit faith and obedience; looking upon him as a sort of deity, and the universal head of the Empire, as well as of the church: And they wondering at the uncontrollable authority and power with which he reigned, cried out with pleasing admiration and triumph, What power on earth is equal to this of the Pope, signified by the beast? What prince or potentate is able to resist, or contend with him, or stand before him? All must and shall submit to him, and vail to his authority over them, which he will assume by disposing of crowns and kingdoms, and treating kings and emperors with indignity and contempt at his pleasure *.

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things, and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

5 And by the devil's influence, and God's permission, he opened his mouth, as with great terror, to with high swelling words of vanity, talking at a haughty and imperious rate in promises and threatnings, and in blasphemous boasts of divine authority, and claims of religious, as well as civil homage to be paid to him, who would *exalt and magnify himself above every god*. (*Dan. xi. 36.*) And he was permitted to exercise his idolatrous and persecuting power, more or less, through his whole reign, which was to last for the space of forty and two prophetic months, which amount to twelve hundred and sixty years, and make up the same period of time that is allotted to the church's being in the wilderness, and the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. (See the note on *chap. x. 6.*)

6 Yea,

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* A most shocking account of the ex- and dignities of emperors and princes, extravagant pride, and tyrannical insolence may be seen in Dr. *More's* theological of *Popes*, in treating the persons, crowns, works, p. 490.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

6 Yea, he was represented as *speaking marvellous things against the God of gods*, (Dan. xii. 36.) and *sitting as God in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God*; (2 Thess. ii. 4.) and arrogantly assuming the prerogatives of God in pretending to forgive sins, and usurping authority over mens consciences, and establishing such idolatrous laws and canons, as are a dishonour and reproach to his sacred name: And, methought, he went on with his blasphemous reproaches of *the church of God*,* (in which he after a special and gracious manner dwells, as he did in his tabernacle and temple of old) fligmatizing them as heretics and apostates; and robbing them of their glory, by setting up for an universal headship over them; which belongs to Christ only: He likewise disgraced the names and characters of departed saints and the angels in heaven, by fabulous legends about them, and turning them to an idolatrous use in paying the religious worship to them, which they detest; (*chap. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.*) and in anathematizing the faithful servants of Christ, that are citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and his holy martyrs that have their mansions in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

7 And he was permitted by divine providence, and spirited up by Satan, to set himself against the professors of Christ, who were visible saints, by violent persecutions and wars upon those that should refuse to submit to his authority: By which means he was suffered to pervert some, and deprive others of their estates, liberty, and lives; and to exercise his tyrannical power over all nations of various lineages and languages through the vast extent of his empire.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

8 And his power and authority, in the whole of his dominion, was represented to be so prevalent, that all the inhabitants of the Empire would be brought into either a forced, or willing obedience to his cruel and idolatrous decrees; except those whom God of his own mere grace has chosen, as his peculiar people, and knows as particularly and distinctly by name, as if they were written down, in a literal sense, in the Lamb's book of life; in which all are, as it were, registered, who were given him of the Father, to be redeemed and brought safe to glory, in virtue of his sacrifice, which may be said to have been slain, not only in the purpose of God from eternity, (see 1 Pet.

NOTE

* By his *tabernacle* some understand the temple of Christ's body, in which he, the eternal Word, who is God, dwelt, or tabernacled on earth: (John i. 1, 14.) And this may be said to be blasphemed

in the sacrifice of the mass by a pretended *transubstantiation*, and offering it up again and again, as though by one offering he had not perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

is 19, 20.) but in the first promise, and in its typical representations and prophecies, and saving efficacy, from the beginning of the world, ever since the fall of man.

9. If any man have an ear, let him hear.

9. If any one is desirous to understand the meaning and importance of these prophecies, relating to this new antichristian power, Let him seriously attend to what has been said about it, for his caution against holding any communion with it; and to what is going to be immediately added, for his encouragement, support, and comfort, which is this:

10. He that leadeth into captivity, shall go into captivity: He that killeth with the sword, must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

10. To The great antichrist, who, during this period, takes so many captive at his will, and tyrannizes over their consciences, shall not always prevail against the church of Christ; but shall at length be himself taken captive and reduced to an abject state, and they shall triumph over him: He who has been the cause of eternal death to some, by means of his pernicious errors, and the cause of temporal death to others, by martyrdoms and wars, must himself, at the expiration of his term, be utterly destroyed, soul and body, by the sword of men, and the sword of the Spirit for ever; what measure he metes to them, God will measure to him again. (*Matth. vii. 2.*) It requires a great deal of faith to believe this, and of patience to wait for it; and as the people of God, during the reign of the beast, will have great occasion for the exercise of both these graces; so here is a consideration well suited to support their patience at the worst of times in hope of deliverance; and to strengthen and animate their faith to persevere and bear up with Christian fortitude under all tribulations, as believing that what is foretold of the downfall of antichrist shall surely be accomplished, in God's appointed time, to his glory, and their triumph over all his and their enemies.

11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like

11. After this, was presented to my view another form of a beast, which, though for substance the same with that but now described, (*ver. 1, &c.*) may on account of its shape, and in different considerations of it, be called another beast*, which rose up from the earth.

NOTE

* The obscurities and difficulties that lie upon all conjectures I have met with about the meaning of this *second beast*, most of which may be seen in Mr. Lowman's note upon it, are so great and many, that it would answer no good end for the reader to be puzzled with them, as I myself have been; nor can I be fully satisfied with that, which I am most inclined to, though with some singularity, viz. that this *second beast*, which ex-

ercises the same power, and has the same mark, and name, and number, with the first, is another representation of the same papal empire set in a different point of light, chiefly (I do not say wholly) in its ecclesiastical, as the former was chiefly in its temporal power. And it is no uncommon thing for the same state to be set out in Scripture by different emblems; as the *Perſian* empire is by a bear and a ram, (*Dan. vii. 5. and viii. 3.*) and the *Grecian*

10. *And he* *like a dragon* *of the bottomless pit* (*chap. xii. 9.*) And he appeared with two horns, resembling those of a lamb, a symbol of his spiritual, as well as temporal dominion, who seemed to put on a specious air of meekness and gentleness, humility and purity, like a lamb; but, in reality, his anathemas and cruel injunctions, enforced by the civil arm, were as terrible, as the rage of a dragon.

11. *And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.*

12. *And under pretence of being the universal head of the church, he, as shewn to me in vision, assumes and makes use of all the power and authority, (that is) that had been before represented as exercised by the beast, which appeared in a former vision under the figure of a monster of seven heads and ten horns, with a crown on each of them: (ver. 1.) And by violent methods of excommunications and persecutions, through the assistance of secular powers, he forces the carnally-minded inhabitants of that part of the earth, which is under his dominion, to pay all the religious homage, obedience, and submission to him under this new form of his appearing, as had been given to the monstrous beast that was represented under another figure in the foregoing vision, (ver. 3.) as recovering sovereign empire at Rome, after it seemed to have been mortally wounded past recovery.*

13. *And, the more effectually to compass his tyrannical and idolatrous design, he pretends to miraculous powers; inasmuch that, as *Elijah*, to vindicate the character of the *Jehovah* of *Israel*, as the only true God, obtained by prayer, that fire should come down from heaven, at one time to consume the burnt-sacrifice, and at another to consume the captains and their fifties, which were sent by king *Ahaziah* to apprehend him; (1 *Kings* xviii. 37, 38. and 2 *Kings* i. 10, 12.) so this two-horned beast seems to do like miracles; and that publicly in the view of many spectators,*

NOTE.

in the wilderness. (See the note on *chap. x. 6.*) And this is all that I think of moment in the present case, whichever way the vision of the beast, as appearing like a lamb with two horns, &c. be interpreted. But the number of the beast, ver. 18. at the close of the description of this second beast, manifestly relates to the date of antichrist's power, which is signified by the first beast. This seems to be a strong objection to all such interpretations, as make the second beast to be emblematical of any different person or power, that rose at any considerable distance of years after the first.

to confirm his false doctrines and usurped authority; which may be considered as pointing at the *living wonders*, (2 Thess. ii. 9.) and numerous sham-miracles of the Romish church, which are boasted of and recorded in their legends; and at their dreadful thunderbolts by public anathemas, in which they curse the excommunicated with bell, book, and candle, as though they would bring fire down from heaven upon them; and which are executed, by delivering them over to the secular power to put them to death by *burning*, or other tortures, which are indeed *fiery trials*.

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

14 And he imposes upon the subjects of his empire that are influenced by earthly things, deluding them into superstition and idolatry, by means of those feigned miracles which he pretended to have power to work, under the countenance, approbation, and encouragement of the secular arm, the emblem of which was his *speaking as a dragon*: (ver. 11.) And he persuaded, enticed, and even commanded these earthly-minded people to set him up as an idol, and pay their homage to him, as to the image of the beast, which was represented in the former vision to have recovered sovereign empire at Rome, after it was thought to have been wounded unto death in its *seventh* head; (ver. 3, 12.) which may be considered as emblematical of their deifying the Pope, and of all their image-worship, and paying blind obedience to the whole system of popery, which was set up by his authority.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast, should be killed.

15 And he had means sufficient in his own hands to establish his authority, as the living image of the former beast, together with the authority of all his idolatrous constitutions, and to enforce it with vigour and efficacy, that, like the imagined living oracles of the heathens, this living image of the beast might both speak blasphemies and terrors in publishing its arbitrary decrees and sanguinary laws, and might execute them by excommunications, pains, and penalties, even to death itself; upon all that should refuse to worship, or to acknowledge, honour, and submit to the injunctions of this image of the beast, according to the representation that in the present vision is given of it; which may be considered, as pointing to the severe laws and practices of the Romish church, in its proceedings against all that renounce its authority, and are deemed heretics.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark

16 And that the true sons of the apostate church might be the more evidently distinguished from others, who would not comply with his authority, he ordered that persons of all ranks and degrees within the dominion of the papacy, high and low, rich and poor,

mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads;

for he is the Lord of the beasts, and the number of his name.

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his

19 And so strict and severe were these orders †, that no one whatever was allowed the common privilege of merchandize or commerce in buying or selling, much less the pretendedly more valuable privilege of buying or selling pardons, dispensations, and indulgences, &c. except those that made an open profession of the popish religion, and thereby wore the distinguishing badge of the beast, and bore his name; like children of their own father, as the *Papists* do of the *Pope*, who in *Latin* is called *Papa*; or that took upon them the profession of that system of erroneous doctrines, which he established, and are characteristic of him, as the great antichrist.

20 It is an instance of adorable wisdom in God, for reasons best known to him, to foretel events of this nature in such a covert manner: And it requires spiritual wisdom and application of thought, with humble dependence on divine guidance, to understand the mystical descriptions of the antichristian beast.

Whoever

NOTES.

(See *Ainsworth* on the place.) And *Grotius* shews that *servants* were principally marked on their foreheads, and *soldiers* on their hands. (Vid. in loc.)

† *Pareus* observes in his note on this verse, that *Pope Martin* the Fifth, in his Bull annexed to the Council of *Constance*, enjoined by an oath, that all who professed themselves to be devoted to the *Roman See*, should expel all those, that do not hold the faith and communion of the church, as scabby sheep, which infect the flock of the Lord; and should not permit them to preach, nor to dwell among them, nor to make any contracts or bargains, or exercise any trade among them; nor to enjoy with Christians the comforts of humanity. And *Mr. Gradock* refers to the Council of *Lateran's* anathematizing all that entertained any of the *Waldenses*, or traded with them; and to a synod in *France*, which forbade any commerce with *heretics* in buying or selling.

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his number is six hundred three-score and six. Whoever is minded, and has any skill for inquiries of this sort, let him carefully employ it in a close and diligent search into the number of years henceforth to come, when this idolatrous power is to rise in its full strength, that he may thereby learn, who, or what is meant by this representation of it; and consequently, at what time its period of twelve hundred and sixty years shall expire. The finding out of this need not be absolutely despair'd of: For its rise in its complete state is to be discovered by computing from the time of this vision a number of years, which is commonly used by men in their way of reckoning; and that number is * six hundred and sixty six.

RECOLLECTIONS.

In how many forms doth the papal antichrist appear! sometimes with the meekness and gentleness of a lamb to deceive, and at others with the fury and cruelty of a dragon to destroy; both uniting to pervert and ruin the church of Christ. With what blasphemies doth he open his mouth! With what lying wonders doth he impose upon earthly-minded men! With what uncontroul'd authority doth he command and force his subjects to submit to idolatrous image-worship, and all the abominations of popery! And with what dreadful severity doth he curse all that will not openly profess absolute and blind obedience to him and his decrees! This is the plain mark of the beast; and they that have not this mark upon them, whether they be of high or low degree, must, according to his orders, be deprived of the common privileges of civil society and commerce, and of life itself. Alas! How many nations and people are deluded into fatal errors, to their eternal perdition, by his allurements on one hand, and terrors on the other! None under his dominion can be secured against it, but God's elect that are written in the Lamb's book of life, the virtue of whose sacrifice has been effectual to salvation, through faith in him, ever since the entrance of sin, soon after the creation of the world. But how much sower the *Romish* potentate may distress these by wars, persecutions, and martyrdoms, to the killing of their bodies, he shall never prevail to pervert and destroy their souls. And, blessed be God, there is a certain limited time,

NOTE.

* The obscurity in which the number 666 is left in prophecy, calls for studious modest inquiry, and humble prayer to settle the meaning of it. The learned Mr. Potter, in an elaborate discourse on this number, endeavours to adjust it by extracting the square root of 666, which, with a fraction of $\frac{41}{25}$ is 25, which multiplied into itself and adding the fraction, gives the number 666, and adding 75 to the year of our Lord 33, makes 108, and this, added to 666, makes 774; when, as some think, the beast arrived to its state of manhood, and the war without stopping of images began. Others have thought that this number might be made out by the Greek word *Laticinos* (*Laticinos*) which signifies the Latin church, the numeral letters of which make just 666, thus,

30. 1. 300. 5. 10. 50. 70. 200. which, added together, amount to that

number. But as these, however ingenious, are very uncertain conjectures, I have rather chose to fall in with such writers, as seem more probably to compute the number 666 from the time when the apostle John received and wrote this vision, which, says Mr. Lowman, taking the general received opinion, was about the year of our Lord 94; and adding 666 to 94 makes 760, which reaches but about four or five years beyond the rise of the beast, as supposed to be about the year 755, or 756, when the Pope became a temporal prince, and received the investiture of Peter's patrimony from Pepin king of France, and might possibly be about 4 or 5 years in taking actual and complete possession of it. (See Mr. Lowman's note.) According to this account, antichrist's reign is to expire about the year of our Lord 1015, or 1016, as may appear by adding 1260 to 755 or 756.

time, set in prophecy, for his utter downfall; when all the evil he has done to others, shall, in righteous vengeance, be retaliated upon him, to the glory of the Redeemer, and the happiness of his people. How delightful is the prospect of this; and what a support to faith and patience under all antichristian oppressions! Did we but certainly know when to begin the computation of the twelve hundred and sixty years of his reign from six hundred and sixty-six, we could be at no loss to say when they shall end. Such hints are given of this in prophecy, as became the wisdom of God; and we may hope to come at some knowledge of their meaning by humble inquiries into them, with a dependence on divine light and guidance. Let those of us therefore, who are desirous of understanding these things, seriously consider what is said in prophetic writings about them; and comfort ourselves with assured hopes, that, in God's prescribed time, the Church shall get through all her troubles, and triumph over all her enemies; and that then what we know not now, we shall know with the clearest evidence of their exact accomplishment.

C H A P. XIV.

To comfort the church under the melancholy representation which had been made in the foregoing visions of the 1260 years of the witnesser prophesying in sackcloth, of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the reign of antichrist, a chorus of the heavenly church is introduced in another vision, as celebrating the praises of God, in the presence of the Lamb, for their happiness, who, as a virgin-company, had continued faithful to Christ and his cause under that period, 1.—5. Then follows a vision of three angels; one proclaiming, in a way of prediction, the everlasting gospel, which should be preached at the Reformation; another, the downfall of Babylon, the same with the antichristian beast; and a third, the dreadful wrath of God which should be poured out upon the worshippers of the beast, together with the blessedness of them that die in the Lord, 6.—13. To this is added a vision of Christ himself, with a sharp sickle in his hand, and of an angel crying to him to execute judgment on his enemies, as ripe for destruction, under the emblem of a harvest ripe for cutting down, which he accordingly did, 14.—16. And a vision of two angels more; one of which had also a sharp sickle; and the other cried to him to proceed to further executions of judgments, without delay, upon the antichristian party, that had filled up the measure of their iniquities, which was done with dreadful vengeance, under the emblem of a vintage fully ripe, and trodden in the wine press of God's wrath, 17.—20.

TEXT.

PARAPHRASE.

AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

AT the close of the preceding visions, (*chaps. xi, xii, xiii.*) which opened the most grievous scenes before me, relating to the state of the church's afflictions, and antichrist's reign, for twelve hundred and sixty years, I was immediately favoured with another, of a most delightful and encouraging nature, for the relief and comfort of the church under all the tribulations of the foregoing period. I looked with earnest desire to see what should next be revealed; and, behold! with admiration and joy, I again had a

vision of the true Lamb of God, who had been slain, (*chap. v. 6.*) as standing with victory and triumph on mount Zion, the city of the living God, where Jesus the Mediator is: (*Heb. xii. 32, 24.*) And with him I saw the hundred and forty four thousand, which had before been symbolically represented to me as his sealed ones, (*chap. vii. 4.*) to intimate, that during the whole reign of antichrist none of them were lost: All which appeared with the mark of God, his Father's name visibly written on their foreheads, to denote that they were his peculiar people, who had made an open and honourable profession of Christ and his gospel in the worst of times, and were entirely devoted to him, as his faithful servants, in opposition to all those that had the mark of the beast. (See the note on *chap. xiii. 16.*)

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled

2 And, methought, I heard a melodious voice of joy and praise from among this triumphing assembly in heaven; the voice of a vast multitude, as signified by many waters; (*chap. xvii. 1, 15.*) and a voice as loud as a great clap of thunder: And it was exceeding harmonious in mine ears, like the music of temple-worship on solemn festivals; where harpers played upon their harps, and others joined with their musical instruments, in charming concert with the voices. (*1 Chron. xxv. 1, — 7. and Ps. lxxiii. 25.*)

3 And this glorious company united, as with one heart and voice, in singing a lofty hymn of blessing, honour, glory, and power to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever; (*chap. v. 13.*) A psalm or song of praise, of a most excellent nature, and new strain, for redeeming love, as suited to all the light, grace, and purity of the gospel-revelation. They were employed in this solemn act of worship in the presence of God, bowing with the most humble and adoring prostration before him, as sitting on the throne; (*chap. iv. 10.*) and in the presence of the four living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers; and of the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the church. (See the notes on *chap. iv. 4, 6.*) And so spiritual and sublime was this song, that none could fully understand it, or taste its sweetness, and join heartily in it, but those that are symbolically represented by the hundred and forty four thousand, who were redeemed by the blood of Christ, (*chap. v. 9.*) and, in consequence thereof, by his power and grace, from among the rest of mankind upon earth, and particularly of the antichristian part of them.

4 These are they which were not defiled

4 These are the holy and happy souls, who, in the days of antichrist's reign, did not defile themselves with

called with wo- with the idolatry of the Romish church, that great
men; for they are whore of Babylon, and mother of harlots, with
virgins: these are whom many committed fornication or spiritual whore-
they which fol- dom, (*chap. xvii. 1, 2, 5.*) as idolatry is often styled
low the Lamb by the prophets: (see *Exek. xvi.*) For they are like
whithersoever he pure and chaste virgins, espoused to Christ, their one
goeth: these were and only husband, (*2 Cor. xi. 2.*) and, as such,
rejected from a- would never go into spiritual adultery in worshipping
mong men, being images, saints, or angels; or applying to any media-
the first-fruits unto tor but Christ. These are of those that keep close to
God and to the the Lamb of God, in their dependence alone on the
Lamb, and not merit and virtue of his sacrifice, for pardon and all sal-
only, and not vation, and in their faithful adherence to all his doc-
first-fruits, and trines, ordinances, and moral commandments; fol-
of the first-fruits lowing his guidance and example in every duty, trial,
of the first-fruits and affliction, in which he went before them, and call-
of the first-fruits ed them to come after him, as sheep after their great
of the first-fruits Shepherd, till he should bring them safe to glory.
of the first-fruits These were redeemed to God, by his precious blood,
of the first-fruits from among every kindred, and tongue, and people,
of the first-fruits and nation of mankind, (see the note on *chap. v. 9.*)
of the first-fruits and were delivered by his grace from all the antichris-
of the first-fruits tian-party, and their sins and errors; they being a
of the first-fruits holy people, consecrated to God the Father, and to
of the first-fruits the Lamb who was slain; and being a pledge of many
of the first-fruits more, that should be so; even as the first-fruits were
of the first-fruits holy and consecrated to the Lord, and were an ear-
of the first-fruits nest of the following harvest.

5 And in their 5 And there was no designing hypocrisy or pre-
mouth was found- wailing deceit in them; but they were faithful and up-
no guile: for they- right, in their profession of Christ, and testimony a-
are without fault- gainst all idolatry and corruptions in doctrine and wor-
before the throne- ship, and in all that they said: For in their govern-
of God, as to their- ing behaviour, and conscience toward God, they are
of God, as to their- without blame before him in love, (*Eph. i. 4.*) and
of God, as to their- are accepted as completely righteous in his sight, who
of God, as to their- imputes not iniquity to them, but the righteousness
of God, as to their- of Christ, (*Rom. iv. 6,—8.* compared with *Psal.*
of God, as to their- *xxxiii. 1, 2.*) in which he looks upon them, and they
of God, as to their- appear without any charge of guilt before his throne.

6 And I saw a 6 And as a further encouragement to faith, hope,
another angel fly in and patience, I beheld an angel flying through the
the midst of hea- air, as one did before, (*chap. viii. 13.*) but now
ven, having the with a different, and more comfortable message; and
everlasting gospel that was to notify the preaching of glad tidings of
to preach into great joy, as contained in the gospel of the ever-bless-
them that dwell ed God, which, for substance, is unchangeably the
on the earth, and same, ever since the publication of it in the first pro-
to every nation, mise, (*Gen. iii. 15.*) and never shall be abolished, as
and kindred, and the ceremonial law was, but shall issue in eternal life.
tongue, and peo- The angel proclaimed, that this gospel should be
ple, and all that preached

preached to the inhabitants of the earth, even to all sorts of people among them, of what nation, lineage, or language soever: Which may be considered as a prediction of God's raising up faithful ministers at the *Protestant-reformation*, who should preach the pure uncorrupted gospel of Christ, and give solemn warnings against all corruptions of his word and ordinances, according to what this angel spoke, as representative of them;

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

7 Saying to all people, with great earnestness, zeal, and fervour, as with a strong voice, which might be heard far and wide, and demanded attention, See to it that ye worship and serve God in spirit and truth according to his word, as the only rule of faith and obedience, in opposition to human inventions and traditions, with holy reverence of him and fear of offending him by idolatry, or any other iniquity; and that ye glorify him, by humble adorations of his divine being and perfections, and his holy providence; and by ascribing all salvation to his free and sovereign grace, through the only Mediator, in opposition to the merit of good works, and the mediation of saints and angels: For the time is now come, in which he will begin to execute judgments upon his antichristian-enemies. And let all your worship be offered up to the great God, through Jesus Christ, and, in opposition to all creatures, to him only (*chap. xix. 10. and xxii. 9.*) who is the Creator of heaven and earth, and the sea, and springs of water, and of all things contained therein.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

8 And, after this, there followed another angel with most joyful tidings to the church, giving them notice, that, in God's due time, their great antichristian-enemy should be utterly destroyed, an earnest of which was given in the *Protestant-reformation*, laying, in the very terms that had been used concerning the *Chaldean-Babylon*, (*Isa. xxi. 9.*) and in prophetic style, which speaks of things to come as though they were already past; and doubling the expression to give the strongest assurance of its certain accomplishment, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*; Thereby intimating that, as the ancient *Babylon* did actually fall, according to the prophecy; so antichristian *Rome*, that great city, which may be called mystical *Babylon* for its haughtiness, persecutions, and idolatries, should certainly be destroyed in its appointed time; because, as men use to be overcome by strong wine, and lewd women are said to entice their lovers to fornication, by giving them philters or love-potions; so by the allurements of riches, honour, and pleasure, and the deceits of lying wonders, she had intoxicated all na-

tions

And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

he shall have his part in the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

And so horrible was the representation of the punishment of such offenders, that, methought, I saw the smoke of the fire, which tormented them, ascending up incessantly with dismal darkness, as from a fire which shall not be quenched to all eternity: (Mark ix. 43, 44.) And they, like miserable wretches that are in the bitterest anguish day and night, have no intermission, ease, or respite of their torment, who yield themselves up to the authority of the antichristian-beast, under any form of its appearing; and this shall be the deplorable condition of every one who openly professes obedience and devotedness to it, as

though

tions under her dominion, and prevailed upon them to have fellowship with her in idolatrous worship, which is frequently represented by the prophets, as spiritual whoredom, that incenses the wrath of God against the practisers of it.

And a third angel succeeded the two last, with tidings as terrible to the antichristian party, as the two former were comfortable to the faithful servants of the Lord: But he gave them fair warning beforehand, saying with a thundering voice, enough to strike terror into all that heard it, If any one in these days of light, and after these plain notices, will still obstinately persist in paying religious homage to the antichristian-beast, which has been described under various forms, (chap. xiii.) and in submitting to his authority, and complying with image-worship, or other parts of Popish superstition and idolatry; and shall make an open profession of all this, like bearing its distinguishing mark on his forehead; or shall be active in serving its interest, like setting his hand to it, (see the note on chap. xiii. 16.) he will do it at his utmost peril.

To Be he who, or what he will, he shall feel the weight of divine vengeance: As he drank of the intoxicating wine of the great whore's fornication, in practising idolatry with her, (ver. 8.) he shall drink of the wine of God's just fury, (Jer. xxv. 15, 16.) which, like the strongest deadly composition, is prepared without mixture of mercy, and is poured out with dreadful abhorrence of such an one, as into a cup filled with his provoked wrath; and he shall be punished with agonizing pain, as with the torment of burning fire and brimstone, in the sight of the holy angels, as witnesses and executioners of it; (Matth. xiii. 49, 50.) and before the face of the Lamb of God, as Judge of all, who will pass a righteous sentence upon such an one, and will behold his deserved misery, without relenting, or affording any help or pity.

11 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

12 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

though its name were printed on his forehead. (See the note on chap. xiii. 16.)

12 In this view of things, we see the trials that the patience of the saints will be put to, and the honour with which it will appear and be crowned at last, in the accomplishment of what they patiently waited for: Here we see who they are, that, notwithstanding all oppressions by antichristian enemies, keep close to the word of God, as the only rule of their faith, worship, and obedience, and faithfully conform to it in heart and life; and that maintain the purity of the doctrines and institutions of the Lord Jesus, as what they sincerely believe, profess, and practise upon his sole authority, in opposition to all the corruptions, traditions, and impositions of men.

13 And for their further support and comfort under all tribulations, I heard a voice from heaven, like that which came from the excellent glory, relating to our blessed Lord, (2 Pet. i. 17.) saying to me, Write in your narrative of these prophetic visions, that they who die in the faith of Christ, united to him as members of his mystical body, and shall be found in him*, (Phil. iii. 9.) as well as they who suffer martyrdom for Christ, are and shall be unspeakably happy from the time of their death to all eternity: Yea, the Spirit of prophecy, whose testimony is infallibly true, positively assures them, from this time forward, of the certainty and excellence of this blessedness, which is so great, that, at the end of their trials on earth, they shall rest with sweet refreshment from all their labour and sufferings for Christ, from all their spiritual conflicts with sin, Satan, and the world, and from all sorrows of every kind: And none of their works of faith, love, and patience, shall be lost, or forgotten; but they shall all follow them to bear witness to them, as true believers who die in the Lord, that they may receive the blessed fruit of them in a proportionate reward of grace, at the great day of account: (see Rom. viii. 17. and 2 Cor. iv. 17.) though they do not go before them, in a way of plea or merit, to entitle them to eternal life.

14 After

N O T E

* I rather think that *the dead who die in the Lord*, relates to all true believers that have a saving interest in Christ, than merely to *martyrs* for his sake: For this best agrees with the meaning of like phrases in 1 Cor. xv. 18. and 1 Thess. iv. 14, 16.; and a declaration of the blessedness of all such is more extensively useful and encouraging to the whole church,

under her various troubles, in the present state of sin and sorrow. And though the particle (*απαρι*) rendered *from henceforth* is differently referred by critics to either what goes before, or to what follows after it, there may be no great difference in the sense as given in the phrase.

13 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

14 After this, I looked again for some further revelation; and, observe the following vision; I saw an illustrious bright cloud; and upon this cloud the Lord Jesus, the Messiah himself, who was truly man, and often styled *the Son of man*, appeared, in like manner as he did in *Daniel's* vision; (*chap. vii. 13.*) he also appeared with rays of glory upon his head, which may be called a crown of gold, to signify his royal dominion, as Lord of all; (*Dan. vii. 14.*) and with the figure of a sharp sickle in his hand, such as husbandmen use in reaping corn; an emblem of his coming forth in righteousness to cut down his antichristian enemies.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

15 I also beheld another angel coming forth from the church-triumphant in heaven, which is eminently the temple of God where he most gloriously dwells; and this angel, as delivering the order which he brought from God in the heavenly temple, earnestly called upon the Lord Jesus, who sat on the bright cloud, saying, Execute righteous vengeance on evil doers, without delay, which was emblematically expressed by immediately thrusting his sickle among them and reaping them down: For it is high time, according to their provocations and to divine appointment, that thou shouldst cut them off; for the wicked inhabitants of the earth are become as ripe for destruction, as the corn is to be cut down at the harvest, like what was said of ancient *Babylon*. (*Jer. li. 33.*)

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the harvest of the earth was reaped.

16 Accordingly, the set time for this stroke upon antichristian powers being come, the Son of man, who appeared as sitting upon the cloud, (*ver. 14.*) immediately began to execute judgments on that wicked

NOTE

Some are of opinion, that in this vision, the *sickle*, *reaping*, and *harvest*, are to be taken in a good sense, as they often are in Scripture; and that they here refer to Christ's reaping the fruits of the gospel-ministry, and gathering a great multitude of souls into his kingdom, at the time of the *Reformation*; or to his gathering the whole church to himself at the end of the world.—But as these expressions, and those in the next vision, manifestly allude, at least to *Psalm* iii. where they signify the judgments of God for the great wickedness of the people; and as the *sharp sickle* in the hand of the angel, that appeared in the next vision, (*ver. 17.*) was an emblem of execution, it seems most proper to interpret the same emblem in the same way in both these visions, whether we refer the first to the stroke upon antichrist at

the *Reformation*, which was a great distress upon her, and diminution of her subjects and power, or to any other punishment of her before her downfall; and refer the second to her utter destruction at the close of her appointed period, or to the final judgment of all the wicked. But as the *wintage* is after harvest, and is represented (*ver. 18. &c.*) in more terrible language of destruction than the *harvest*, I am inclined to consider the *harvest* as emblematical of the stroke given to Popery at the *Reformation*; and the *wintage* of that which shall come with the heaviest vengeance hereafter, to the utter extinction of that antichristian power. And the general description here given of this total overthrow is drawn out more particularly, and at large, in the 18th and 19th chapters.

the earth was reap-
ed.

ed generation; and multitudes of them were as effectually cut down as corn is with a sickle in harvest; which may point at the great blow he gave to the beast, when several nations fell off from, and made head against Popery at the time of the Reformation, which was a great loss and terror to the antichristian-party, and the occasion of bloody wars, by which many of them were slain; and the Lord did judgment upon their graven images, as he did upon those of ancient Babylon. (Jer. li. 47; 52.)

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

17 And as Christ has all instruments at his command to execute his wrath; so I afterward saw another angel come forth from the immediate presence of God in the heavenly temple, with the like emblem of a sharp sickle in his hand, to signify that he was to be employed for further executions of wrath, in subordination to, and by the command and power of Christ.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

18 Hereupon, methought, another angel came forth from the altar of burnt-offering, the fire of which, to consume the sacrifices, was an emblem of divine justice, which this angel had authority (*eterna*) to denounce; and he, according to his commission, called aloud with great earnestness to the angel, who appeared with the emblem of a sharp sickle, in token of his being armed for vengeance, (*ver.* 17.) saying, Go on to execute further judgments in the slaughter of the antichristian-party, the measure of whose iniquity is now full, and of whom it may be justly said, as it was of idolatrous Israel, *Their vine is of the vine of Sodom; their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters are bitterness.* (Deut. xxxii. 32.) Cut them off, as the clusters of grapes are cut off from a vine with a sharp hook, at the time of vintage; for they have fitted themselves for just destruction, as grapes are in fit case to be pressed when they are thoroughly ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

19 Immediately upon this, methought, I saw the forementioned angel, (*ver.* 17.) cut down the apostate church, which may well be styled the degenerate vine of the earth, as with a sharp crooked knife; and gathering them together, delivered them up to be punished by the most dreadful executions of divine wrath, which would press them with as sore and heavy calamities as are figuratively represented in the writings of the prophets, by the treading of grapes in a wine-press. (*Isa.* lxiii. 3, 4. and *Lam.* i. 15.) And this appeared, in my vision, as a very great wine-press, an account of the vast multitude that Christ will tread down in his anger and fury. (*Isa.* lxiii. 3, 6.)

18 And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press, even unto the horse-bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

20 And the destruction of the idolatrous persecuting enemies of Christ, that were without the pale of his true church, and shall be excluded from the heavenly city. (*chap. xii. 15.*) and cast into outer darkness, was to exceeding great and extensive, as signified by the treading of a large wine-press, which is wont to be done without the city, that in allusion to the greatest slaughter in a field of battle, and to the juice of grapes, which, being squeezed out, is called *the blood of grapes*. (*Gen. xlix. 11.*) their blood seemed to flow, like prodigious quantities of liquor, from a huge wine-press, in such a torrent, as might be figured out by its rising and swelling as high as the bridles of war-horses, to the destruction of them and their riders; and spreading through all the *Pope's* patrimony, the length of which may be computed at sixteen hundred furlongs*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How delightful is a view of Christ as the Lamb on mount *Sion* among his people, and of their singing with inimitable strains of melody, the praises of redeeming love! These have distinguishing marks of the children of God, that own and honour him, and are owned and honoured by him: These are they that were redeemed from among the rest of mankind on earth: They are pure from the superstitious and idolatrous worship of the Papists; and follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes, and are a kind of first-fruits consecrated to him and his Father; they are sincere in their profession of his name, and are prevailingly holy and without blame in love, and free from guilt and condemnation, through faith in the righteousness of Christ: In these, patience shall have its perfect work; and they will conscientiously obey the commandments of God, and maintain the uncorrupted doctrines of Christ, with a humble trust in him for all salvation; and these shall be blessed from the time of their death, and for ever afterwards, as has been declared by an immediate voice from heaven, and by the infallible Spirit of prophecy. How thankful should we be, that after a long night of popish darkness, the everlasting gospel was preached in its purity, and with great success, at the Reformation! What a blessing is this to the church of Christ! and what a humbling and vexatious stroke upon antichrist, and sure presage of her utter downfall! This shall be as certainly accomplished in God's appointed time, as it is now foretold. And, ah! how dreadful will the portion of their cup be, who have drank of the wine of her fornication, by joining in her idolatrous worship! They shall drink of the cup of

R: 4

God's

NOTE.

* Mr. Joseph Mede observes, that it is not said that the angel, which cast the grapes into the wine-press trod them; but this was done by Christ himself, who is represented as the King coming forth from heaven, with a celestial army of horsemen to destroy them: (*Vid. Biblariid in loc.*) And says in his *Remains*, (l. 3. chap. 7. p. 736. of his works) "Supposing this *vintage* to be yet to come, I am much inclined to think, that this 1600 furlongs without the city should be a designation of *Peter's* patrimony; or the demesne of the church, which, in the largest extent thereof, from the walls of *Rome* to the river *Po*, is exactly 1600

furlongs, or 200 Italian miles; whereby it is probable that the *Pope's* own territories, *Stato della Chiesa*, may prove the cockpit of this execution, whether Christ, as into a wine-press, will from all parts gather the bloody grapes, when he means to tread them." However, as the execution, here pointed at, seems yet to come, it probably will be at the close of the period set out in prophecy, for the reign of the beast: And though we may not be able to determine the exact time and circumstances of it, it will as surely be brought to pass, in God's appointed time, as the *harvest* and *vintage* return in their appointed seasons.

God's wrath, without mixture; and their torment shall be incessant for ever and ever. The Lord Jesus, who appeared on a bright cloud with a glorious crown, will espouse the cause of his church and people, and come forth in righteousness against their antichristian enemies, by gradual dispensations of providence, in which he will cut them down, as with a sickle in harvest; till at length he will make a full end of them, as the grapes of a vintage are cut off, and cast into and trodden in a wine-press, till all their juice is squeezed out. Thus shall it be done in God's set time to the idolatrous and tyrannical church of Rome; and the slaughter of them will be great and terrible beyond expression. How should we rejoice in faith and hope of the glorious, though awful manifestation, that will then be made of God's righteous judgments, to open a way for the prosperous and happy state of the church, which shall succeed it.

C H A P. XV.

A vision of seven angels, having the seven last plagues, follows, by way of solemn preface to the execution of them, as to be made upon the beast; and a song of praise is sung by the church, which obtained victory over him, 1.—4. Then the temple in heaven is opened, from whence the seven angels come out with the seven plagues; and to them one of the living creatures gives seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, that they might be ready to pour them out in their order: Upon which, the temple was filled with an inaccessible cloud of glory, 5.—8.

TEXT.

AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing vision, which gave me a general view of the judgments that should come upon the antichristian-beast, I had another, which was preparatory to the execution of the judgments themselves, that in their order were to begin, carry on, and complete his ruin. To this purpose I beheld a very remarkable and amazing appearance in heaven of seven angels, as ministers of divine vengeance, who had a commission to execute the seven last severe strokes that were to fall upon antichrist, in their course, till he should be utterly destroyed: For all the wrath, which God had righteously determined against this idolatrous and persecuting power, was contained in these executions to make a full end of it, together with all the enemies of Christ and his church,

I furthermore saw, as in a former vision, (*chap. iv. 6.*) a representation of a large vessel, like the molten sea, in Solomon's temple, (*1 Kings vii. 23.*) which shone with a brightness as white and clear as crystal, mixt with a beautiful colour, as red as fire:

Which

NOTE.

Among the numerous conjectures about the meaning of the sea of glass, it seems to me that all those are to be discarded, which refer to the state of the church on earth; the scene of this vision being in heaven, *ver. 1.* as it also had been in the former vision of the sea of glass, where the four living creatures,

they over the beast,
and over his image,
and over his mark,
and over the num-
ber of his name,
stand on the sea of
glass, having the
harp of God.

Which may be considered as an emblem of the spot-
less purity and efficacy of the atoning blood and righ-
teousness of Christ, whereby he appealed the fiery re-
sentments of divine justice: And, as to the glorious
company which, through faith in the blood of the
Lamb, had bravely resisted, and by their doctrine,
example, and patient sufferings even unto death, had
overcome all temptations to comply with the authori-
ty of antichrist, and to make an open profession of his
idolatrous religion, which may be signified by their
getting the victory over the beast, and his image and
mark, and the number of his name; These appeared
as standing with confidence and triumph on the sea
of glass, as the foundation on which they stand with
complete acceptance in the divine presence; and they
seemed to have harps in their hands, in allusion to
those musical instruments that were used in the tem-
ple-service for celebrating the praises of God.

3 And they sing
the song of Moses
the servant of God,
and the song of
the Lamb, saying,
Great and marvel-
lous are thy works,
Lord God Almighty;
just and true
are thy ways, thou
King of saints.

3 And, methought, they joined in concert, as a
chorus, to sing the wonders of Divine Providence in
a triumphant song for deliverance out of the hands of
their persecuting enemies, like that which was com-
posed by *Moses* the servant of the Lord, and was
sung by *Israel* for their deliverance from the *Egyp-
tians* at the Red-sea: (*Exod. xv. 1, &c.*) And to
this they added a song of thanksgiving and praise to
the honour of Christ, the Lamb of God, for the
much greater salvation brought in by him; a song,
which he put into their mouths, saying, in an ascrip-
tion of glory first to God the Father*, Great and
wonderful

NOTES.

representatives of the ministers of the
church, appeared. (*Chap. iv. 6.* See the
note there.) And among the interpre-
tations, which consider it as in heaven,
that given in the paraphrase, I am ready
to think, may be as probable as any o-
ther, since these victorious and triumph-
ing saints are represented as standing
on the sea of glass; and so may direct
our thoughts to the foundation on which
they stand with joy and praise, rather
than to their own purity, love, and zeal;
or any other excellent graces found in
them, or exercised by them. And as
the following paraphrase on this chapter
proceeds upon the supposition, which I
think the Spirit of prophecy determines,
that heaven is the scene of this vision,
it need not be wondered at, that it is
different from the sense of most expo-
sitions, who place the scene in the church
on earth; or that I take no further no-
tice of their explications, while I all a-

long give what seems to me the most
probable that has offered to my thoughts
upon the plan of this scene's being in
heaven.

* Though Christ in his divine nature
is truly the *Lord God Almighty*, and
characters equivalent to this are else-
where ascribed to him; (see the notes
on *chap. i. 4. 8.* and *Dr. Waterland's*
sermons at the *Lady Moyer's Lecture*,
p. 230, &c.) Yet it appears to me that
God the Father, or *God essentially* con-
sidered, inclusive of the three divine per-
sons, is here most immediately spoken of
under this title; and that Christ in his
office-capacity, is meant by *King of*
saints, to whom glory is ascribed to-
gether with the Father: For the former
part of this song seems to relate to the
song of *Moses*; and the latter, to the
song of the *Lamb*: And the title, *King*
of *saints*, is with the greatest propriety
given to Christ, who in his regal office

wonderful are thy works of providence in ways of judgment and mercy, O Lord Jehovah, the almighty God, whose uncontrollable power performs them; and then to the glorified Lamb, saying, Thou art just and righteous in all thy proceedings against thine enemies, as rendering to them according to their deserts; and thou art true in executing thy threatnings upon them, and faithful in performing thy promises to thy people, O thou King of the church, which consists of holy ones, whom *thou hast redeemed from all iniquity, and purified to thyself.* (Tit. ii. 14.)

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou only art holy*: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

4 Who, that knows thy name, O Lord, will not reverence, worship, and put his trust in thee, and ascribe all glory to thee, who art infinitely worthy of it? (*Pf. lxxxix. 7.*) For, in opposition to antichrist's vainly assuming to himself the title of *his Holiness*, thou only art fit to wear it, as thou art originally, essentially, and communicatively pure and holy. We believe, and rejoice in the thought, that the time is coming, when thou wilt be more abundantly feared and glorified on earth, than hitherto: For all nations of the world shall come as a willing people unto thee, and own and honour thee, and pay their solemn adorations to thee, as in thy special presence, and under thine eye, in the assemblies of the saints; for the judgments, which thou wilt execute upon thine antichristian-enemies, are manifest tokens of thy taking the part of thy people against them, to the conviction of all that duly observe the awful operations of thy hand.

5 And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

5 At the conclusion of this praising song, I had a further vision, which led on to the scene of judgments that were to be executed in their order: And as the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple, and the ark of the testimony, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim between which the Lord dwelt, (*Exod. xxv. 22.* and *Pf. lxxx. 1.*) were seen when the high priest entered into the most holy place; so, methought, I saw an opening in heaven, which gave me a view of God's most eminently glorious throne, and of all the symbols of his favour to his true worshippers, to intimate that, as inquiries were wont to be answered from the oracle, (*2 Sam. xvi. 23.*) so God was now about to answer the prayers of the church for delivering them from the power of their antichristian-enemies.

6 And the seven angels came out of the

6 Whereupon, I beheld seven angels, the appointed ministers of God's wrath and justice, coming out

NOTE

is, by way of peculiarity, *King of Zion*, and *King of the church*; and the following part of this song is evidently, though not restrictively, applicable to him.

the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

of the most holy place, even heaven itself, as having received his orders with respect to the seven judgments, that were to be successively executed upon the beast: These angels, to signify the sanctity of their character and ministrations, appeared as arrayed in an awful and splendid manner with holy garments of pure and white linen, and golden girdles about their breasts, such as the high priests used to wear, (*Exod. xxviii. 4, — 8.* and *Lev. xvi. 23.*) when they went into the holy of holies, and came out from thence to bring the answers of God to the prayers of his people, which they had received from the oracle.

7 And one of the four living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers, (see the note on *chap. iv. 6.*) who were most nearly concerned for the welfare of the church, was employed, by divine commission, to deliver to the seven angels, to each of them one of the seven golden cups or vials*, which were filled with mortal ingredients, as symbols of the wrath of God, which they were to be instruments of pouring out upon the idolatrous persecuting beast, at his order, and by the activity of his own power, who is from everlasting to everlasting God, and lives for ever to execute his righteous judgments in their course, till all his enemies be utterly destroyed.

8 And when they had received their commission, I saw the heavenly temple filled with a cloud of glory, resembling that which formerly filled the tabernacle: This cloud appeared like a thick smoke awfully glorious, which was a symbol of divine vengeance, (*Pf. xviii. 8.*) as going forth from the presence of the Lord, and to be executed by the glory of his power, in the destruction of antichrist; even as the cloud on the tabernacle was of his dreadful judgment upon *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, and the murmuring *Israelites*: (*Numb. xvi. 19, 42.*) And as *Moses* could not enter into the tabernacle, nor the priests stand to minister in the temple while the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord; (*Exod. xl. 35.* and *1 Kings viii. 11.*) so no one was able to enter into this heavenly temple, to entreat for the preventing of these grievous calamities upon the beast; none were suffered to do this, that judgment might have its free course, till all the seven punishments, to be inflicted by

N O T E.

* A vial was a cup, or wide-mouthed vessel, to drink out of; and as a cup figuratively signifies suffering; and affliction, *Psal. xi. 6.* and *Matth. xxvi. 39.* and we often read of a cup of the Lord's fury; and a cup of trembling, *Isa. li. 17,*

22. Jer. xxv. 15. and *Zech. xii. 2.*; so these seven vials or cups are said to be full of the wrath of God, which was to be poured out upon, and drank by the antichristian-beast, and all the enemies of the church. (See also *chap. xiv. 10.*)

by the ministry of the seven angels, were fully executed in their order.

RECollections.

How glorious are the triumphs of the saints, who stand in the immediate presence of God, with all acceptance on the foot of the atoning righteousness of Christ; and who, through faith in his blood, have got the victory over all their enemies! And how sweetly do they sing of mercy and of judgment; of the wondrous works of providence and grace, which are just and true, to the glory of the Lord God Almighty, and of the Lamb, their sovereign Lord and King! How worthy is he to be revered, served, and glorified! All the beauties of holiness, and of every other divine perfection, shine in him; and the time is coming, when all nations of the earth shall worship him, and his judgments shall be fully manifested in the destruction of the antichristian beast. The decree is gone forth against him; the seven angels have their commission to pour out their seven vials, which are filled with the wrath of God, to be executed in due course upon him; and no intercessions shall be admitted, to prevent the progress of these judgments, till they be fulfilled in the utter destruction of all popish powers, and every other enemy. What a support and encouragement to the church of Christ is the belief and assured prospect of this, as given by the Spirit of prophecy, for their comfort under all their present tribulations?

C H A P. XVI.

The seven angels are ordered to pour out their seven vials of the wrath of God on the antichristian-beast and all its supports, 1. The first vial is poured out on the earth with grievous sores, signifying great troubles through the Romish community, between the year 830 and 988, 2. The second on the sea, which is turned into blood, signifying a great effusion of blood in the holy wars, between the year 1040 and 1190, 3. The third on the rivers and fountains, which became blood, signifying civil wars in the papacy, between the year 1200 and 1371, 4.—7. The fourth on the sun, which scorched men, signifying wars through the contentions of Popes for the papal chair; and the destruction of the Eastern empire, between the year 1378 and 1530, 8, 9. The fifth on the seat of the beast, signifying the establishment of the Protestant-reformation, which was a great shock to Popery, between the year 1530 and 1650, 10, 11. The sixth on the great river Euphrates, signifying some terrible invasion of the Pope's dominion, from its eastern borders, which seems, in order of time, to be yet to come, 12.—16. And the seventh on the air, the seat of Satan's power, which shall issue in the total destruction of all antichristian enemies, 17.—21.

TEXT.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

PARAPHRASE.

THE seven angels, having received their respective vials or cups of the wrath of God; (*chap. xvi. 7.* see the note there) and so being ready to pour them out in their order, whenever he should give the word of command; I thereupon heard an exceeding loud, awful, and authoritative voice, proceeding from the heavenly temple; (*ver. 17.*) whereby, in allusion to

God's

God's ancient way of manifesting his will from the oracle, he issued out his commission, saying to them; Go forth according to my appointment, and pour out the cups successively *, that are full of the righteous wrath of God, upon the wicked inhabitants, and particularly the antichristian-enemies, on the face of the earth; a general view of which had been given me in several foregoing visions.

And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

VIAL I.] 2 And, in obedience to this command, the first angel went forth, and poured out his cup of divine wrath upon the earth; which may signify people of various countries, and chiefly of the inland parts of the antichristian-territories: And thereupon, methought, the most loathsome and painful boils and ulcers, like one of the plagues of Egypt, (Exod. ix. 9.—11.) broke out upon, and tormented this spiritual Egypt, in various miseries which beset them, even the subjects of the papacy, that had complied with the authority and corruptions of the antichristian-beast, and made an open profession of the idolatrous worship that he had set up; (chap. xiii. 15. see the note there) † which may be considered, as referring to the general

N O T E S.

* There is a remarkable similitude between the four first vials or cups of God's wrath, under the seventh trumpet, which relate to the judgments that led the way to, and should issue in the ruin of antichrist; and the four first trumpets, under the seventh seal, (chap. viii.) which relate to the destruction of the Roman empire, and made way for the rise of antichrist. They are represented in both, as falling upon the earth, the sea, the rivers, and fountains of water, and the sun, and that in the same order; which may intimate that the steps of her fall shall be answerable to those of her rise.

† As the first of these vials, and consequently all that follow, is expressly said to be poured out upon the men that had the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image, we must, I think, conclude that the judgments, intended by them, are such as were to be executed upon the antichristian-church, during the period of 1260 years, after the Pope had obtained his temporal power. And though, among the many different constructions about their accomplishment, it does not become us to be positive in either of them; yet Mr. *Loriman's* pleases me best, as it preserves the series, as far as they have hitherto appeared by historical facts, in a most regular order.

—Wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores; wounds that stink, and are corrupt, and loathsome diseases, are striking figures of a corrupt and miserable condition, *Isa. i. 5, 6.* and *Pf. xxxviii. 5, 7.* Accordingly, the noisome and grievous sores are a fit emblem to represent a corrupt and calamitous state of the worshippers of the beast; and this the but now mentioned learned writer thinks may relate to "all sorts of corruptions, that gained ground, and prevailed in the *Romish* church and state, which brought a painful sore, and was in great measure the cause of those many evils, that for a long time afflicted the inhabitants of the earth, during the quarrels and contests between the successors of *Charles the Great*, and were an occasion of many other calamities, that greatly weakened the Western Empire by the *Normans* (who were Heathens) invading and ravaging several parts of it, especially in *France*; by the *Saracens* ravaging *Italy*; and the *Hungarians*, then a barbarous and brutal people, breaking in upon the *German* dominions; which was the calamitous state of the Western Empire, for above 100 years from the death of *Lewis the Pious*, A. D. 840, to the settlement of the *German* empire in *Otto the Great*, A. D. 962; and well agrees to the prophetic description, and to the time and order of the prophecies,

general corruption of faith, worship, and manners, and the sore distresses, in body and mind, of the professors of this apostate church, when dreadful devastation was made upon them, as occasioned by the contentions and quarrels, which arose between popish princes after the death of *Lewis* surnamed the *Pious*, and continued for a long time, between the year eight hundred and thirty, and nine hundred and eighty-eight.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea: and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

VIAL II.] 3 And the second angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon the sea; which may signify many people of the *Romish* empire, (*chap. xvii. 15.*) that dwelt upon the borders, or islands of, and trafficked upon the sea: And as the waters of *Nile*, in another plague of *Egypt*, were turned into blood, and the fishes in that great river died; (*Exod. vii. 17, 18.*) so every one in those parts, who owned, and lived in subjection to the popish power, was in danger of being mortally wounded, and of his blood being congealed, like that of a dead man; thereby intimating, that vast multitudes would perish in the wars, that would mostly be carried on by sea; which may be considered as referring to the wars that ensued upon the Pope's claiming a power of excommunicating and deposing emperors, and to the holy wars, that he set on foot for recovering *Jerusalem*, and the sepulchre of our Lord and the holy land, from the *Saracens*, who had taken possession of it; in which wars many hundred thousands of papists lost their lives: All which came to pass between the year one thousand and forty, and eleven hundred and ninety.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

VIAL III.] 4 And the third angel poured out his cup of divine wrath on the rivers and fountains of waters; which may also signify a multitude of people in some principal countries of the popedom; and thereupon, as the streams, rivers, ponds, and pools, as well as the great river *Nile*, in the forementioned plague of *Egypt*, became blood; (*Exod. vii. 19,—21.*) so it was intimated that these countries should be filled with blood; which may be considered as referring to the dreadful civil wars between the

Guelphs

N O T E

prophecies, with respect to each other." The historical facts correspondent hereto, and to the four following vials, are supported by the authority of writers of the greatest credit, as he has quoted them at large, which, as far as I have had opportunity of examining them, appear to be faithfully represented.—I readily agree with this, and some other judicious expositors, that whether we can

be certain as to the precise times and contents of each particular judgment, signified by the several vials in their order, or not, there is a general use to be made of the more general meaning, if we were to understand no more of it, for the encouragement of faith and patience, and for warning us against falling in with the great apostasy of this period.

Guelphs and Gibellines, and between popes and emperors, that continued for above a hundred years, and occasioned vast effusions of the blood of the inhabitants of cities, towns, and villages, in most parts of *Italy*, between the year *twelve hundred*, and *thirteen hundred and seventy one*, which cut off abundance of the Pope's dependents, and was a great diminution of his power.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus;

5 And no sooner had this angel executed his commission for pouring out his vial of divine wrath upon the countries, signified by the rivers and fountains of waters to turn them into blood, than I heard him say, with a voice of solemn adoration and praise, Just and righteous are these awful dispensations of thy providence, O Lord, who in thy being and perfections, counsels and appointments, art, and ever wast, and wilt be from everlasting to everlasting unchangeably the same: Thy ways of judgment ever have been, are, and will be, all righteous; and thou must, and shalt be justified in them, and particularly in the judgment now denounced; because, in this way of retribution, thou hast justly retaliated upon this persecuting blood-thirsty people the very same sort of punishment, as they had wickedly inflicted upon thy church.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink: for they are worthy.

6 For they have, in a most cruel manner, imbrued their hands in the blood of thy holy people and ministering servants, that have suffered martyrdom, and therein bore an honourable testimony to thee and thy cause, and sealed it with their blood; Which may be considered as referring to the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, great numbers of which had been lately persecuted unto death at the instigation of Pope *Innocent the Third**; who also set up a bloody court of *Inquisition*, about the year *twelve hundred and twelve*: And therefore thou hast given them a cup of wrath to drink, by sending the sword among them,

S f 2

that

N O T E

* The *Waldenses* were so called from *Waldo*, a citizen of *Lyons* in *France*; and the *Albigenses* took their name from *Albi*, another city of *France* in the upper *Languedoc*, where they first appeared; and their opinions were mostly the same with those of the *Waldenses*, who declared against the authority of the Pope, and many corruptions of the *Romish* church; such as *transubstantiation*, *purgatory*, *praying for the dead*, and *worshipping of saints*. These toward the beginning of the 13th century were persecuted under the influence of Pope *Innocent III.* who erected a *Court of In-*

quisition for extirpating heretics, as they were called: In order to which he appointed commissaries to inquire after them. They that were suspected of heresy were examined by torture; and the accused were not allowed the privilege of defending themselves, or making any appeal. At first they were punished with imprisonment; afterward were put to death by the sword, and most commonly, at length, by burning: And in the year 1212 (say some, or 1216 say others, he made *Dominicus*, a *Spaniard*, inquisitor-general. (Vid. *Spanh. Eccles. Hist.* p. 1657, &c.)

that they may be drunken with their own blood; (Isa. xlix. 26.) and hast thereby rewarded their iniquity upon their own heads; for by their murderous cruelties they have highly deserved it.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.

7 And the equity of this divine procedure was so evident and affecting, that, methought, I immediately heard the voice of another angel, who, as it were, personated the souls under the altar, that had been long ago slain by *Rome-Pagan*, (*chap. vi. 9.*) echoing back to, and joining in this solemn applause, to signify the consent and approbation of the whole church, saying, *Amen*, I heartily concur with this ascription of glory to thy righteousness in this way of thy judgments; O Almighty Jehovah, who hast made known thy great power herein: Thou art true in fulfilling thy threatnings of thine enemies; and faithful in performing thy promises to thy people; and art undeniably and gloriously just in inflicting this deserved punishment on such a blood-thirsty generation; as thou also art in all the judgments, which thou hast begun to execute, and wilt further carry on, till thou shalt utterly destroy the *Antichristian*, as thou hast the *Pagan* persecutors.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

VIAL IV.] 8 And the fourth angel poured out his cup of divine wrath on the sun; which, being the chief of the heavenly bodies, is a fit emblem of the supreme power or headship over the church, which is claimed by the Pope, as *Jacob*, the father of the family, was signified by the sun in *Joseph's* prophetic dream: (*Gen. xxxviii. 9, 10.*) And the angel had a commission, by means of this judgment, to bring tormenting distresses on the wicked men of the earth, as extreme and destructive as are produced by the most violent burning heat of the sun, when it smites the earth, and its fruits and inhabitants, as with fire in a hot and sultry day, without any shade to screen them from it. (See *Pf. cxxi. 5, 6.*)

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not, to give him glory.

9 Accordingly the Popes themselves, together with the subjects of the papacy, were as sorely afflicted in body and mind, as by the parching and noxious heat of the sun, when it shines in full strength, and burns up all before it; which may be considered as referring to the terrible calamities that arose from various causes, and particularly from the ambitious intrigues and furious wars that were carried on between several Popes for the papal chair, between the year *thirteen hundred and seventy-eight, and fifteen hundred and thirty* *. And under all these piercing ca-

NOTE

* There were many warm contests between *Urban* and *Clement VII.*; and afterward

lamities, they who suffered by them were enraged at them; and, like a wicked people of old, *freited themselves, and cursed their God*, (Isa. viii. 21.) quarrelling with, and reproaching his providence, who had power to inflict, or remove these punishments: And they hardened themselves in their cruel and idolatrous practices, and evil ways, and obstinately refused to give glory to him, by acknowledging the justice of his dealings with them, and by confessing their iniquities, and accepting the punishment of them, or forsaking them, but still persisted in them; which may be supposed to refer to their barbarous and perfidious persecutions of *John Hus*, and *Jerome of Prague*, notwithstanding all the judgments which they themselves were groaning under.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

VIAL V.] 10 And, next in order, the *fifth* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon *the throne* (*Genov*) of the antichristian-beast, the emblem of his power; which in prophetic style is signified by a *throne*; (2 Sam. iii. 10. and vii. 16. and 1 Kings i. 37, 47.) And may be considered as referring to the great shock that was given to the authority and dominion of the Pope, by the glorious *Protestant-reformation*, when, between the year *fifteen hundred and thirty*, and *sixteen hundred and fifty*, it was completely established, and many nations fell off from him, and turned their arms against him; and others retrenched their

NOTE

afterward between *Eugene IV.* and *Felix*, besides other intermediate competitors for the Popedom, which they severally claimed at the same time. This occasioned excommunications one of another, and violent persecutions and wars, that were severely distressing to themselves, and to their respective adherents, during the schism, which, having lasted for above 50 years, ended about A. D. 1447. Here may also be a further reference to the schism between the *Greek* and *Latin* churches, and the wars between the Christians of the *Eastern* and *Western* Empire, which remarkably weakened both, and gave the *Turks* an advantage, which issued in their taking *Constantinople* about A. D. 1453, and putting an end to the *Eastern* Empire. Others still further take in the consideration of a pestilential distemper, which spread like fire in *Germany* about A. D. 1349, and had infected *England* in a sweating sickness some years before. All which events were between the year 1378 and 1530. Within this period was the Council of *Constance*, which about

A. D. 1414, condemned *John Hus*, and afterwards *Jerome of Prague*, to be burnt to death for opposing the Pope; and they were accordingly executed, contrary to the most solemn promises of safe passports, under pretence that *no faith is to be kept with heretics*. (See, for these facts, the authorities quoted in Mr. *Lowman's* history of them.)—Some have included these villainous executions in the *scorching heat of the sun*. But as all the judgments, signified by the *vials*, were to fall on the *papal* party, I can scarce think that this vial related to the death of those noble witnesses against the corruptions of *Rome*; though, probably, it might to the vexation which their brave testimony to the death gave their adversaries, and to the *Bohemian* war that was occasioned by this decree of the Council of *Constance*, and the execution of it, which cost great numbers of Papists their lives. And their going into these violent measures, while the hand of God lay so heavy upon them, may, perhaps, be pointed at, by *their not repenting to give him glory*.

And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

their obedience to his authority; which was a great eclipse of his glory and diminution of his power, and a sore vexation to his spirit, and to the subjects of his kingdom, which, like one of the plagues of Egypt, (Exod. x. 21.—23.) was full of hideous darkness, the emblem of disconsolate sorrow and affliction; (Isa. v. 30. and ix. 1.) and was so distressing to them, that they raged like persons, who bite their tongues for madness and extremity of anguish.

11 And instead of being reclaimed by these troubles from their superstition, idolatry, and persecutions, they continued inveterate enemies to Christ and the gospel; and, in effect, spoke opprobriously of the great Lord of heaven and earth, on account of his bringing many painful anxieties and sore rebukes upon them, though it were for their iniquities; Which may be considered as pointing at their reviling the first reformers, and their adherents, as *schismatics*, *heretics*, and *apostates*, and inveighing against their separation, and the means used to support it, though apparently under the conduct of the God of heaven, as unlawful, damnable, and rebellious: And so blind and hardened were their hearts, that they would take no conviction of the evil of their doings, as the procuring cause of all the punishments that befel them; which might refer to the Council of Trent, that, notwithstanding all the light of the Reformation, established the whole system of their corrupt doctrines and idolatrous worship; the Council beginning in the year of our Lord 1545, and ending in the year 1563.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

VIAL VI.] 12 And the sixth angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon the great river *Euphrates*, which, literally taken, was the eastern part of the *Roman* empire, and the barrier of the *Assyrian* and *Babylonian* empires; and so was a proper emblem of the eastern boundaries of the papal kingdom: And by the pouring out of this vial the barrier was destroyed, that had prevented invasions from those quarters upon the Popedom; which, in allusion to the draining of *Euphrates* by *Cyrus*, when he took *Babylon*, (Isa. xlv. 27, 28. Jer. l. 38. and li. 36, 37.) may be signified by the drying up of the waters of the

N O T E.

* See Dean *Prideaux's* account at large of the draining of the river *Euphrates* by *Cyrus* at his taking *Babylon*. (Connect. Part I. book 2. p. 121, &c. edit. 2th.)—There are indeed several other interpretations of this vial, than that supposed in the paraphrase, which may be seen in many expositors. Some refer it to the conversion of the *Jews*, as

signified by the kings of the east, in order to which the *Turkish* empire is to be weakened: Others think that some newly converted princes of the East will pass *Euphrates* to join with the true church of Christ: Others understand it as relating to the ruin of the *Turkish* empire, or *Eastern-antichrist*: Others, to the removal of obstacles, such as the terror of the

the great river *Euphrates*, that a passage might be opened for the *Turks*, or some princes of eastern countries, to invade mystical *Babylon*; and may be supposed to relate to some powerful invasion of the kingdom of the papacy by that people, as a future judgment, which is not yet executed upon it; but is still to come, as the next is that shall follow it; and is to be prayed and waited for with faith and patience, and to be explained by events, which shall as certainly be brought to pass, in God's time, to fulfil these parts of the prophecy, as any of the foregoing have been, and as all the rest shall be, in their order.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

13 And I further saw, in my vision of what would come to pass under this *vial*, a figurative representation of three impure spirits, which, in allusion to another plague of *Egypt*, (*Exod. viii. 3, — 6.*) were as filthy and loathsome as the frogs that crept into their bed-chambers, and crawled about on the earth and in the waters; and may be considered as an emblem of the activity, trouble, and mischief, of these wicked spirits, which were represented as proceeding, one out of the mouth of the great dragon, the devil; (*chap. xii. 9.*) another out of the mouth of the antichristian-beast, which has seven heads and ten horns with crowns upon them; (*chap. xiii. 1.*) and a third out of the mouth of the second representation of the antichristian-beast, which appeared with two horns like a lamb, but spoke as a dragon; (*chap. xiii. 11.*) which may also be fitly styled the false prophet. (*Chap. xix. 20. and xx. 10.*) These united together in sending forth their emissaries, such as the Jesuits, Monks, and Friars, and secular clergy, to creep into the secret councils of princes, that they might corrupt them, as the frogs of *Egypt* crept into the chambers of the king; (*Exod. viii. 3.*) and to spread wicked principles and practices by their influence.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather

14 For these ecclesiastics are of the very same spirit and temper with the infernal demons, who excite and influence them to make false pretences and appearances of working miracles, as the magicians of *Egypt* did, that by these *lying wonders*, and other crafty methods, they might deceive the princes of the

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balls, edicts, and censures of *Rome*, that had before prevented the princes of *Europe* from invading the Pope's dominions, but will no longer be a terror or bar to them, which these writers suppose may be signified by the figurative *Euphrates* being dried up. But I humbly apprehend that we want light sufficient to de-

termine any thing particularly about such an obscure representation of this *vial*, till the providence of God shall turn the prophecy into a history, in the fulfilment of it, by some eminent judgment upon the papacy, greater than all that has preceded it.

gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place, called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice

from the earth, and particularly of the papal empire; and might stir up all the inhabitants of the world, whom they could draw into their interest, to engage them to join together as a formidable army, that should set themselves in battle array against Christ and his church, in their last united and most vigorous opposition to the almighty God, who is infinitely stronger than all his enemies.

15 As this will be a time of great trial to the church, The Lord Jesus said, Observe what I now declare beforehand, for their caution and comfort, I will come as suddenly, surprisngly, and unexpectedly, as a thief in the night, to the destruction of my antichristian-enemies, and the deliverance of my people from their power. Happy, and only happy is that man, who in a prepared waiting and looking for it, shall be found all along, and at that day, to be upon his watch, like one who by that means keeps his garments from the thief that would rob him of them; and to maintain his faith in me for righteousness unto eternal life, and his integrity and soundness in principles and manners, unspotted by the defiling doctrines and practices of popery; lest, at my coming to take vengeance on that party, he be exposed to disgrace and confusion, like the man who had not on a wedding-garment; (*Matth. xxii. 11, 12.*) and lest, in the sight of numerous spectators, he have nothing to cover the shame of his nakedness.

16 And it was still further represented to me, that, in this last struggle against the church, the devil, as working in and by wicked and seducing spirits, would muster all his forces together as in a field of battle, which, for the dreadful slaughter that would then be made of his armies, may be compared to that famous place, which, according to the signification of the Hebrew word *Armageddon*, is the mountain of *Me-giddo*, (*הר-מגידו*) in the tribe of *Manasseh*; (*Josh. xvii. 11.*) and may be called the *Mountain of destruction*, where *Sisera* was defeated, and his numerous host cut off by *Barak* with the edge of the sword; (*Judg. iv. 15, &c. and v. 19.*) and where king *Josiah*, for his imprudent rashness, was slain by *Pharaoh Neco*, king of *Egypt*; (*2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30.*) on which account the greatest lamentations were proverbially expressed by mourning in the valley of *Me-giddo*. (*Zech. xii. 11, 12.*)

VIAL VII.] 17 And upon this grand defeat of antichristian-powers, The seventh and last of the angels poured out his cup of divine wrath into the region of the air, which encompasses the whole earth, as an emblem of the vengeance that should be executed

voice out of the temple of heaven; from the throne, saying, It is done.

ted upon Satan, *the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience; and upon all the demons, which are the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickednesses in high places:* (Eph. ii. 2. and vi. 12.) And to shew that this would be the destruction of Satan's empire, and of all the enemies of the church with him, I heard a loud majestic voice, proceeding from the throne of God in his heavenly temple, saying, The great work is now accomplished; it, according to a former hint, that has been given of the mystery of God, as to be finished, (*chap. x. 7.*) is now brought to its issue; This last cup of divine wrath has completed the judgments which God had purposed to execute, unto the total overthrow and ruin of Satan and all his agents, that they may no longer pervert the doctrines of the gospel, or persecute Christ's faithful servants.

13 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great.

18 And as a further lively emblem of this, metaphor, I heard and saw in the air, into which this last vial was poured, such tremendous and astonishing sounds, and cracks of thunder, and flashes of lightning, as though the whole frame of the aerial heavens were dissolving; and these were attended with such a terrible and universal earthquake, and of such mighty force, as was never felt since the earth was peopled; which may be supposed to represent such amazing convulsions and commotions in this world, as should make a thorough change in the whole system of its religious affairs, to the entire destruction of the dominion of the devil, together with all antichristian powers upon earth; and to the setting up of that glorious state of the church, in which, as has been hinted, (*chap. xi. 15.*) *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ;* and will be a lively image of the heavenly state of perfect happiness, when God will make all things new. (*Chap. xxi. 5.*)

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

19 And the immediate effect of this amazing catastrophe, as represented in vision, was, that the great city of Rome, the head of the papal empire, and all under its jurisdiction, were terribly shattered, and divided into three parts, to be destroyed by three sorts of punishment, in allusion to the threatnings denounced against Jerusalem and the apostate Jews for their abominations, when God said, *A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee; and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them:* (Ezek. v. 12.)

And, together with the capital city of the anti-christian empire, the other cities under its dominion, and the cities of all nations that opposed Christ and his gospel, fell in the wide-spreading ruins: And the whole of that idolatrous and persecuting body, which is mystically called *Babylon*, (chap. xvii. 5.) and *Sodom*, and *Egypt*, (chap. xi. 8.) and seemed to be forgotten of God, through his long-suffering and patience, was now remembered by him, to take vengeance upon her for all her wickedness, corruptions, and oppressions, to make her drink the dregs of the cup of his fierce indignation, as filled up with the most deadly ingredients, without mixture of mercy, (chap. xiv. 10.) in the severe punishments that were inflicted upon her, by way of retaliation for her having made the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication. (Chap. xvii. 2.)

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

20 And as earthquakes sometimes swallow up islands, and overturn mountains, this punishment was represented to be so extensive, as to reach every place where anti-christian enemies dwelt, that they might no longer be found, either on the islands or continents of the earth; and that the idols, which were wont to be worshipped upon mountains, might be utterly destroyed.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God, because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

21 And, to set forth the universal and total ruin of the devil's empire, there were not only representations of thunder, lightning, and an earthquake, to destroy cities, towns, and villages, and to overthrow islands and mountains within its dominion; but wheresoever men fled, as in cases of earthquakes they use to do into the fields, to escape danger, there was no safety for them; but prodigious storms of hail, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, (Exod. ix. 22,—25.) though inexpressibly more terrible than *that*, or than the storm of hail-stones which fell upon the *Amorites*, (Josh. x. 11.) or than any other before or after those, were showered down from heaven upon them, to crush and dash them to pieces: Every stone of which seemed to be of such an astonishing size, as if it were a talent in weight: And yet these obdurate impenitent wretches, instead of taking conviction of their iniquities, and saying, even so much as the hard-hearted *Pharaoh* did under the plague of hail, *the Lord is righteous, and we are wicked*, (Exod. ix. 27.) spake blasphemously against the providence of God therein, as if he had dealt unjustly by them: For their distress and anguish, by means of this last cup of his wrath, was intolerably tormenting to them, as will be found, in God's appointed time, for finishing their destruction. (Chap. xviii.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How manifestly righteous are the judgments of God, that shall be executed, in due season, upon antichristian idolaters and persecutors, and all the wicked and ungodly of the earth! They set under the influence of unclean diabolical spirits, which deceive the nations, and set them as in battle array against the Almighty; and, instead of being reformed by one and another judgment, they obstinately persist in their iniquitous courses, and blaspheme the name of God, as though he dealt unjustly in punishing them. But, how long soever he may bear with them, he has his set time for calling their sins to remembrance, and pouring out the vials of his righteous wrath upon them. And, ah! how dreadful are the calamities, which he sooner or later, will inflict upon them! They are as grievous and tormenting as the forest ulcers; as noxious and mortal, as seas and rivers of blood; as distressing, as the most scorching heat of the sun, which, like fire, burns up all before it; as doleful, as the thickest darkness; as exposed to every invading misery, as a country that has no barrier for its defence; and as terrifying and overwhelming, as insupportable tempests of thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and the heaviest storms of hail, beyond all that ever was felt on the earth. In this manner shall the worshippers of the beast, and all antichristian enemies, drink of the wrath of God, till, at length, they, together with the whole kingdom and power of Satan, shall be utterly destroyed. And who must not say that they are worthy of all this, as a just return upon them for the blood of the saints, which they have shed; and for all their abominable idolatries, and other multiplied corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners? God will be applauded, as holy, righteous, and true, in these executions of wrath; and his church must say *Amen* to his judging thus, concerning all that oppressed and tyrannized over them during the reign of the beast! With what sudden and unexpected surprise will this tremendous day of the Lord come, like a thief in the night! Blessed are they that shall then be found upon their watch, and appear with spotless robes of righteousness and honour before him.

C H A P. XVII.

One of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, explains the meaning of the former vision of the antichristian beast that was to reign 1260 years, and then to be destroyed, whom he describes under the figure of a great whore sitting on many waters, and on a scarlet beast, attired in purple and scarlet and other deckings, and bearing the name of Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, 1.—6. Interprets the mystery of the woman, and the beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and of the many waters on which she sat, who is overcome by the Lamb, and brought to condign punishment by means of the ten kings that had supported her, 7.—18.

TEXT.

AND there came one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that

sitteth

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions, one of the seven angels, who were employed as ministers of justice to pour out the seven cups of divine wrath upon antichrist, came forth and communed in a familiar manner with me, as an angel of the Lord formerly did with the prophet *Zeebariah*, (chap. i. 9, &c.) to explain who, and what were meant by the representations which had been made of her, saying to me, Come near, and I will give you an account of her

siteth upon many waters;

With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet-colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations,

and of God's righteous proceedings in condemning and punishing her, who may fitly be compared to a great strumpet, that *says in her heart, I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow*: (chap. xviii. 7.) and sits with magnificent pomp and power, ease, luxury, and allurements, on the surface of many waters, the emblem of her jurisdiction over many nations and people: The more particular meaning of which I shall soon set before you. (ver. 15,—18.)

2 The reason of her being called *the great whore* is; because, like a lewd woman, she has enticed the princes and governors of the *Roman* empire to commit idolatry with her, which is spiritual fornication, or adultery, and the carnally minded people of the earth, as well as their rulers, have been intoxicated with her wicked arts and allurements, such as her honours and preferments, external pomp of habits, processions and worship, pretended miracles, dispensations and pardons, and other specious motives, to draw men into a compliance with her idolatrous principles and practices, as if they had been overcome with strong wine, or had been bewitched with love-potions, to inflame the vicious inclinations of her *paramours* or *sweet-hearts*.

3 The angel thereupon conducted me, not corporally, but in a vision of the spirit, into a place of solitude or retirement, that I might the better observe and contemplate the state of this antichristian power, during its tyranny over the church in the wilderness; (chap. xii. 6.) and there I beheld the representation of a woman, or the great antichristian whore, (ver. 1.) as sitting upon a beast of scarlet-colour, in allusion to the scarlet robes which the *Roman* emperors wore in time of war, to denote her cruel persecutions, and her ascendancy over the civil powers of the Empire, for supporting her authority and her sanguinary laws and executions. This papal government bore many inscriptions, which set forth the blasphemous titles of idolatry, infallibility, and supremacy, that it would assume, or be called and known by; and it had a monstrous appearance of seven heads and ten horns, according to the representation made of it in my former vision. (Chap. xiii. 1.)

4 And the lewd woman herself, meaning the ecclesiastical power of the Pope, that sat upon, and was supported by the civil power signified by the beast, was apparelled with gay and sumptuous raiment of purple and scarlet dye; which may be considered as a prophetic emblem of the Pope and his cardinals, who are stained with the blood of martyrs, and the colours of whole habits are purple and scar-

let:

inations, and filthiness of her fornication.

let : And she was adorned with rich and glittering ornaments of gold and precious stones and pearls, as emblems of her wealth, grandeur, and sovereignty ; which may point to the imperial authority, and to the vast pomp of the *Romish* church, and the extravagant profusion of its treasures in adorning its temples, relics, and images, to procure the veneration of carnal minds : She was also represented like the ancient *Babylon*, (Jer. li. 7.) as having a golden cup in her hand to entice her devotees to drink of it ; which, notwithstanding its fair tempting appearance, was filled with all manner of abominable errors and iniquities, and with the loathsome impurities of idolatry, or spiritual fornication, and adultery in those that profess espousals to Christ ; and may point at the delusive charms of popery in its gaudy shows, and bold pretences to miracles, pardons, and indulgences, and to being the only true church, and the like, as lures to bring people into her bosom.

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON, THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

5 And upon this strumpet's forehead was an inscription that bore her name, by which she may easily be known and distinguished from all others ; a name importing her to be a MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, (2 *Thess.* ii. 7.) for the depth, secrecy, and unsearchable methods of carrying on her wicked designs ; * and in a figurative or mystical sense BABYLON THE GREAT, meaning the apostate church of *Rome* ; which may be so styled, as she pretends to be the catholic church, and resembles *Babylon* of old, in the large extent of her jurisdiction, and in idolatry, pride, luxury, and oppression : She is the MOTHER, the parent, ringleader, patroness, supporter, and nourisher of both literal and spiritual adultery and fornication, and of all ABOMINABLE UNCLEANNES, and every other sort of notorious crimes, which abound in the nations of the earth, that are under her dominion.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus : and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

6 And I further beheld this whorish woman to be filled, and glutted with the blood of those whom God had set apart for himself and sanctified by his Spirit, and of Christ's faithful witnesses, who sealed their testimony to him with their blood, which she shed on account of their open confession of him : And when I saw her in these unnatural and monstrous forms, I was exceedingly amazed at her grandeur and cruelty, and at the patience of God in suffering her to reign and tyrannize over his beloved people ; as not know-

N O T E.

* Scaliger, Downham, and others, *Protestants* alledged this passage of scripture to prove that the Church of *Rome* merely wrote on the Pope's mitre, till the was *antichrist*.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

ing what to think of one that would sustain such a pompous, vile, and hideous character.

7 Hereupon the angel observing it, said to me, Why did you seem to be so greatly astonished and confounded at this representation? I will explain the meaning of these emblems, which are so dark and mysterious to you, concerning this whorish woman, and the beast she rides upon, and which appear in this vision, according to what you had seen before, (*chap. xiii. 1.*) as having seven heads and ten horns. That which is figured out in this prophetic description is as follows:

8 The beast, which you saw, is a symbol of the Roman empire, so anciently governed by *kings, consuls, dictators, decemvirs, and military tribunes*, but is no longer subsisting in either of those forms, it being now, at the time of this vision, under the government of *emperors*; or when the time comes, which the vision refers to; it may then be said, that the beast, signifying the Roman empire, was idolatrous and persecuting under *heathen magistrates*, but its *Pagan state* is now destroyed; and the Empire, headed by the *Papacy*, will be of such a diabolical, wicked, and tyrannical temper, as derives its original and proceeds from the infernal malignant spirits of the bottomless pit, and will be supported by their instigation and assistance. But, at length, the papal church, which had been destructive to the true church of Christ on earth, shall be utterly destroyed and sent down to hell, to share in torments with their instigators: And (excepting those, whom God has chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, (*Eph. i. 4.* and see the note on 1 John i. 1.) and who are as particularly known by name as if they were literally registered for eternal life in the book of his decrees, and in the book of the Lamb, as persons that were given of the Father to him, to be redeemed, and sanctified, and saved by him) the inhabitants of the papish territories will gaze with admiration, pleasure, and superstitious veneration, when they shall see this beast, which in the forementioned senses was, and is not*, and yet exists in another form, and will be the same, in effect, as a persecuting and idolatrous paganising power, which, in resemblance of the worship of *beast*

N O T E

* The conjectures about the meaning of this phrase, *the beast which was, and is not, and yet is, or and shall be*, (*see the note*) as *Steen's* and the *Alamodrian*, and several other copies have it, are so many and dubious, that it is hard to

say which of them may be depended upon. But one of other of the two senses given in the paraphrase, appears to me as probable as any; and the reader is left to chuse that which pleases him best.

idols, will introduce the worship of angels, saints, and images.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman

9 And here is a proper trial and exercise for a studious and inquisitive mind, that has a faculty of discerning, and spiritual wisdom to understand, reflect upon, and compare the representation of characters, which are given in the preceding and following parts of this vision, as a key to open the meaning of it. It is therefore carefully to be observed and considered, that the seven heads of this idolatrous persecuting power, signified by *the beast*, are emblematical of the seven mountains or hills, on which, as is notorious, the city of *Rome* is built, and on which, as on an imperial seat, the great whorish woman is represented as fixing her throne, with as much power and authority as any ruler of the Empire that had ever gone before her.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space.

10 And for a further understanding of this Romish antichristian-power, it is to be observed, as another distinguishing character of it, that there will have been seven kings, or different forms of supreme government, which are also signified by seven heads; five of which at the time of this vision are abolished, as they consisted of a succession of *kings, consuls, &c.* according to what has been hinted; (*ver. 8.*) and one, even that of Pagan imperial government, is at this present time subsisting; * And another which is to succeed it, namely, that of the Christian emperors, has not yet mounted the throne; and, when this arises, it will continue but for a little while, compared with the other supreme powers that went before, and will follow after it; which may be considered as pointing to *Constantine the Great*, and his successors, under whom the Christian religion was established, and maintained with purity scarce a century and a half; all which forms of government are to cease, in their order, before *that* shall appear, which is intended by the antichristian beast in this prophetic emblem.

11 And

N O T E.

* *Kings* in prophetic style signify *Antes or Kingdoms*, as appears from *Dan. vii. 17, 23.* and if, with several learned commentators, we take the *sixth* king to denote simply the imperial form of government, the powers of which were the same under Pagan and Christian emperors; then, as Mr. *Lowman* thinks, the *seventh* head may point at the reign of the *Gothic* kings, or at the exarchate of *Neonina*, which succeeded the destruction of the imperial government, and was in some respects a new form of govern-

ment different from that, and yet retained so much of its senatorial form, as to make it in that respect much of the same kind with the *sixth*: So that in some respects, according to this and another way of reckoning, as in the paraphrase, it may be called a *seventh* head or form of government; and in that way of reckoning the papal beast may be called the *eighth*; and yet on other accounts the beast may be reckoned the *seventh*, as succeeding to the *sixth*, or the imperial form of government.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

11 And the Roman civil power, on which the scarlet whore appeared to sit, (*ver. 3.*) and which, as has been said, (*ver. 8.*) was anciently administered in various forms of government, and at the time of this vision is not subsisting in either of those forms, but shall hereafter rise as an idolatrous power under her influence. This may be reckoned an *eighth* form of supreme government, in case you consider *that* under *Constantine the Great*, and his successors as the *seventh*. But if you consider the imperial government of *Constantine* and his successors as truly *Christian*, and so no head of *idolatry*, as all the preceding governments were; then the Roman power, signified by the beast, is to be reckoned only one of the *seven*, even the last of them in succession; and so points out the papacy, which is to have its seat at *Rome*, with the Pope and his consistory of cardinals at the head of it, and all the civil power of the Empire to support it; which will as certainly, in God's appointed and predicted time, be finally destroyed, as all the idolatrous heads have been in their order, that went before it.

12 And the ten horns, which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

12 And another sure note of the antichristian power is, that the ten horns, which you saw on the head of the papal beast, (*ver. 3.*) signify ten kings or principalities, that shall arise in the western part of the Roman empire, as to be divided into ten kingdoms; but none of these potentates have received their distinct kingdoms at the time of this vision, but shall receive them as sovereign princes, about the same time, that the papal beast or antichristian power shall begin to erect its idolatrous empire; which may be considered as an intimation, that the rise of the Pope should be at the time when the Empire would be divided into ten kingdoms by the barbarous nations, about the middle of the fifth century, soon after *Gensericus*, the *Vandal*, had taken *Rome*; and so the man of sin, would be revealed, when the Empire, *that let or hindered*, while it was under one head, should be taken away. (2 *Theff.* ii. 3,—8.)

13 These

N O T E

* Most expositors, after Dr. More, render *our hour* (*ἡμετέρα ὥρα*) the same time, as in *ver. 13. 17.* *one mind* (*ἡμετέρα γνώμη*) plainly signifies the same mind, and so *one heart*, and *one soul*. (*ἡμετέρα καρδιά καὶ ψυχή*) *Acts* ix. 34. signifies the same heart and soul. And the word rendered *hour* (*ὥρα*) is often used for and translated *time*. This makes the division of the Empire into the ten kingdoms contemporary with the rise of the beast.— These ten kingdoms are variously reck-

oned up by Mr. Mede and Sir Isaac Newton: But others suppose that there is no necessity of finding out that exact number of different kingdoms, neither more nor less; *ten* being sometimes put for *many*, a certain for an uncertain number. However, all history assures us, that when the northern nations broke in upon the Western Empire, it was divided into much about that number of kingdoms.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him, are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast,

13 These ten kingdoms, with sovereign princes at their head, how different soever they may be in secular interests, will be of the same mind in religious concerns, and, as with one heart, agree to pay homage to the papal power, signified by the beast, and to surrender up their riches, arms, and authority (*ἐξουσίαν*) to his will, and use them to support his supremacy and idolatrous interests and designs.

14 These, under the influence of the papal beast, will set themselves against Christ, to oppose his doctrines, institutions, cause, interest, and people, by violent persecutions, and the power of the sword, and to force their consciences into submission, and blind obedience to the pretended infallibility and ecclesiastical authority, superstition, and idolatry of the Pope. But, in the issue of the combat, the glorious Lamb of God shall be victorious over them, in and by means of the steadfastness of the faith, profession, and patient sufferings of his members, who will make a noble stand against all their enemies, and love not their lives unto death: For he by nature as God, and by constitution as Mediator, is the sovereign Lord of all earthly lords, and sovereign King over all the potentates of this world; as the government of the church and of all nations is upon his shoulders, to order and dispose of them according to his infinitely wise and holy will: And his disciples, who side with him against those common enemies, are effectually called by his grace; are a chosen and peculiar people, whom God has set apart for himself in his eternal purpose; and, in consequence of their election and effectual calling, are made sincere and faithful to him in their profession of his name and gospel, and perseverance in his ways and ordinances, whatever it may cost them.

15 And still further to explain the distinguishing marks of the antichristian whore, the angel said to me, The representation that was made of many waters, on which she sits, (*ver. 1.*) are an emblem of the people of the papacy under her extensive empire, and of the vast multitude of them of different nations and various languages, over which she reigns as a queen, and by which she is supported in her dominion, riches, and grandeur; and says, she *shall see no sorrow.* (Chap. xviii. 7.)

16 And yet the *ten horns*, which were represented in your vision of the beast, and have been interpreted to signify ten distinct states or kingdoms, (*ver. 12.*) and which, amidst all the revolutions and alterations

that

beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

that may be made in them*, will subsist under such like distinct governments, during the reign of the beast, and never be swallowed up in a universal monarchy by any that may aspire after it: Even these very nations or kingdoms, with their respective potentates, which were before engaged in the support and advancement of the whorish woman, shall, in God's appointed time, grow weary of her tyranny, oppressions, frauds, and abominable corruptions in doctrine and practice; and, when they come to see how grossly she had imposed upon them, they shall be incensed against and abhor her, more than they ever before were in love with her; even as gallants use to behave toward a strumpet, when they are convinced of her treacherous delusions, and of the evil of their former familiarities with her: And they shall withdraw their protection of her, and turn their arms against her, and strip her naked of all her riches, pomp, and power, and lay her waste by fire and sword, which shall not only destroy her, but be as tormenting to her, as though they were to gnaw her flesh off from her bones, and burn her to death by devouring flames, as was foretold by the prophet *Daniel*, (chap. vii. 11.) and as the daughter of a priest guilty of whoredom was to be burnt. (*Lev. xxi. 9.*)

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

17 For the great God and Governor of the world, in whose hand are the hearts of kings, and who turns them whithersoever he will, (*Prov. xxi. 1.*) has determined to give them up, for a time, to their own hearts lusts, which they freely and out of choice indulged; (see the notes on *John xii. 40.* and *Rom. ix. 18.*) He also, by an over-ruling providence, turned the voluntary current of their own sinful inclinations into such a course, as should eventually accomplish his purpose, relating to the rise and progress of the papal power; and he permitted them, under the instigation of Satan and the workings of their own corruptions, to agree together to submit to its autho-

NOTE

* The *states* or *kingdoms*, signified by the *ten horns*, are to be, at length, the instruments of the ruin, as they formerly were of the *support* of antichrist. This supposes a continued succession of distinct nations, that originally belonged to the *Roman* empire; though there may be shifts and changes in them, and they may not always be bounded just in the same limits as at the first division of the Empire among them. (See the note on *ver. 12.*) And so the kings that shall hate the whore, &c. are to be considered, not as the same individual persons

that at first supported her, but as their successors in various kingdoms, who will turn against her, as those of the reformed nations have already; and it is to be expected that most, if not all the rest, will follow their example, and unite with them in a religious war against the papacy; though, perhaps, some of them may persist in her idolatrous communion, till they shall see the time of her burning, and bewail her; (*chap. xviii. 9.*) and then shall either renounce her, or all with her.

city, superstition, and idolatry, and to surrender up their strength, riches, and even their crowns, to the service of this antichristian beast: But he did this only for a limited season, till all the words of God, contained in this and ancient prophecies, relating to the flourishing state of its dominion, shall be fulfilled; and then, by a gracious and providential influence, or both, upon their hearts, he will incline them to accomplish the will of his command and pleasure, as well as the will of his purpose, relating to the utter destruction of the idolatrous power which they supported before. (ver. 16.)

18 And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

18 And, to conclude, the plain marks of this antichristian power, relating to *the place* of its chief residence, The appearance of a whorish drunken woman, which you saw and so much wondered at, (ver. 5, 6.) represents the civil and ecclesiastical authority and dominion of the Pope and his consistory of cardinals, that is to be seated in, and raised to its height at *Rome*, the great metropolis: which, and no other, is at this very time to be considered as the mistress of the world, which bears sway over the kings of the earth, and particularly over the nations of the Empire, that hath existed under various successive forms of government, but is now imperial, as the Pope's also, in a manner, will be in reigning over all the kingdoms into which the Empire will then be divided.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How plain are the prophetic marks of the idolatrous and persecuting power of the papacy! This in a spiritual sense is the great whore, who makes blasphemous pretences; and is decked with sumptuous ornaments; whose distinguishing colours of purple and scarlet are the attire of Popes and Cardinals; who has intoxicated princes and people to join in her idolatries, and has glutted herself with the blood of numberless saints and witnesses for Christ: She is a mystery of iniquity; the very image of ancient *Babylon* for pride and luxury, persecution and idolatry; and is the grand parent of spiritual fornication, and of all abominable iniquity: She derives her original from hell itself; and is the great beast, that reigns over vast multitudes of people of all nations, and draws the admiration of all under her dominion, except those that are chosen of God to eternal life: Her seat of empire is at the great city of *Rome*, which is built upon seven hills, and was the metropolis of the *Roman* monarchy: She rose as the seventh idolatrous and persecuting head, after the destruction of those that preceded her, under various forms of government, in the *Roman* empire; upon the division of which into ten kingdoms, she set up her throne with supreme authority, making use of their strength, as ten horns of power to support and defend her ecclesiastical tyranny; and she, by divine permission, seduced them into a compliance with her cruel and idolatrous usurpations, and into a furious opposition to Christ, his people, and cause. To whom can all these descriptions agree, but to the *Romish* papal power? How amazingly monstrous; and yet just, is this divine portrait of her! And how great a part of wisdom is it to find her out, by applying these characters to her, to whom alone they belong! But O what a comfort ought it to be to the church of Christ, and what a terror to the antichristian harlot, that she, who has been so destructive to others, shall finally go into perdition! The glorious Lamb, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, shall overcome her, by animating the faith and patience, and emboldening the holy profession of those that are chosen and called, and faith-

tel in their adherence to him; and in his appointed time he will turn the hearts of those very powers against her, that were before in love with her, and united all their forces to uphold her. He will spirit them up to desert, hate, and oppose her, to strip her of all her riches and grandeur, and to prey upon her, and purine her with fire and sword, till she be utterly destroyed by as painful a death, as if her flesh were to be gnawn off from her bones, and she to be consumed, as by devouring fire, in the conflagration of *Rome*, and by the total ruin of all the territories under her dominion.

C H A P. XVIII.

And another angel from heaven proclaims the fall of mystical Babylon, 1, 10.—3. And another voice from heaven admonishes the people of God not to come out of her, lest, partaking of her sins, they partake also of her plagues, 4.—8. Represents the lamentation of kings, merchants, and mariners over her, 9.—19. And calls upon the church to rejoice in God's taking righteous vengeance upon her, who had slain the saints; and whose utter and irrecoverable ruin is signified by the emblem of a millstone thrown with violence by a mighty angel into the sea, 20.—24.

TEXT.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

PARAPHRASE.

AND after the explication that had been given me in the last vision of the woman, and the scarlet-coloured beast on which she sat, I beheld another angel descending from heaven in most illustrious splendour*, as dispatched with an immediate commission from thence, and invested with great power and authority; and the church on earth was irradiated with his surrounding light and glory, like what appeared to *Ezekiel* in his vision of the glory of the God of *Israel*, which filled the house of the Lord. (Chap. xliii. 2.—5.)

And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen; and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

2 And he proclaimed with an exceeding majestic, loud, and articulate voice, saying, in the very words that foretold, and were accomplished in the destruction of the *Chaldean-Babylon*, (Isa. xxi. 8.) to this effect, The papal hierarchy and power, which for persecution, pride, idolatry, and all manner of abominations, may fitly be styled mystical *Babylon*, whose dominion is with great authority and wide extent, will soon be as certainly destroyed, as if it already were actually fallen from all its riches, grandeur, and power, into the most deplorable ruins: And to certify this with the greater vehemence and assurance, he repeated the words, *is fallen, is fallen*; and

N O T E.

This angel seems to have been *Christ*, the Angel of the covenant, with whose glory the earth was lightened; since it certainly was the glory of the *Jehovah of Israel* that lightened the earth, and filled his house, in *Ezekiel's* vision, of which this bears a resemblance. (See the notes on chap. viii. 2. and viii. 3.)

and added that, instead of her former pomp and splendor, she shall be as hideous and desolate, as the most depopulated and forlorn desert, that is haunted by demons or satyrs, and all unclean spirits, which use to rove about in such places; (*Luke xi. 24.*) and that is the receptacle of doleful creatures, such as screech-owls, cormorants, and bitterns, and all sorts of loathsome fowls, which usually dwell in horrid ruins and solitary wildernesses, and make a dismal noise, according to what was denounced against ancient *Babylon*. (*Isa. xiii. 19,—22. and xiv. 23.*)

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

3 For all nations under her jurisdiction have been intoxicated by her idolatries, that expose her to, and will bring down upon her the dreadful vengeance of God, which she deserves, and must suffer, for her spiritual fornication: And she has not only been guilty of this abominable crime herself; but the earthly kings, who had given their power to the beast, (*chap. xvii. 17.*) have been prevailed upon, by her enchantments, to support, and join with her in idolatrous worship, which is spiritual whoredom; and carnally-minded men, under her dominion, that deal in her pretended spiritual wares, especially at *Rome*, such as pardons, indulgences, dispensations, and popish trinkets, &c. and that make merchandise of mens souls, (*ver. 13.*) have amassed together immense riches through the strong enticements of her spiritual commodities, which have been sold at high rates, and brought in vast gains, to feed their own and her luxury.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:

4 Hereupon, I heard another solemn proclamation immediately from the throne of God in heaven, saying, in his love, care, and tenderness to those that belong to him, but are mingled with this apostate church, in like manner as he warned *Israel* to flee from the old *Babylon*, when it was to be destroyed, (*Isa. xlviii. 20. and Eze. 11. and Jer. 1. 8. and II. 6.*) Depart, my people, and be ye separate from this mystical *Babylon*; touch no unclean thing; but flee with all speed from it, and openly protest against it, that ye may have no communion with, nor so much as connive at her idolatrous and wicked practices, and so be partakers of her guilt; and that ye may not be involved with her in the dreadful judgments and desolations which are now coming upon her in the effusion of the seventh and last great vial of my wrath, according to the representation that has been made of it, (*chap. xvi. 17,—21.*) as the just punishment of all her sins.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven,

5 For the multitude of her iniquities are of such an enormous size, of so high aggravations, and long continuance,

heaven, and God
hath remembered
her iniquities,

and she hath
received her
punishment,

6 Reward her
even as the reward-
ed you, and double
unto her double,
according to her
works: in the cup
which she hath fill-
ed, fill to her dou-
ble,

and she shall
receive her
portion double,
and she shall
be punished
double for her
works: in the
cup which she
hath filled, fill
to her double,

7 How much she
hath glorified her-
self, and lived deli-
ciously, so much
torment and sor-
row give her: for
the faith in her
heart, I fit a queen,
and am no widow,
and shall see no
sorrow.

8 Therefore shall
her plagues come
in one day, death,
and mourning, and
famine: and she
shall be utterly
burnt with fire:
for strong is the
Lord

continuance, as have made her fully ripe for judg-
ment: Their provoking cry, like the sins of *Sodom*,
and the ancient *Babylon*, (*Gen. xix. 13.* and *Jer. li.*
9.) have reached up to heaven; and God is now in
his awful and terrible justice coming forth to call
them to remembrance, and to execute complete ven-
geance upon her for them.

6 This is the time for you, my servants and peo-
ple, to repay tribulation and distress to her, by fire and
sword, in a righteous war against her, as the due re-
ward of her cruel persecutions and oppressions of you,
and your faithful predecessors in former ages, accord-
ing to the law of retaliation; (*Exod. xxi. 23, 24.*)
and ye are commissioned from heaven to multiply ca-
lamities doubly upon her, to her utter destruction, not
from a spirit of private revenge, but as authorised in-
struments of divine justice, in punishing her to the ut-
termost for all her evil deeds, according to the law
which, in cases of robbery, required double restitution;
(*Exod. xxii. 4, 7, 9.*) and according to God's threat-
ning of *Israel's* enemies, that he would recompence
their iniquity and their sin double: (*Jer. xvi. 18.*) As
she has wrung out, and made you drink the cup of
sorrow and affliction; so now ye are called to fill out
to her a cup of doubly bitter and deadly ingredients,
for her to drink to the very dregs.

7 In proportion to her pride and self-confidence,
in which she has magnified and exalted herself, and
to her luxurious way of living, render to her torment-
ing misery and anguish, in her utter confusion and o-
verthrow: For she, being the whore on many waters,
(*chap. xvii. 15.*) proudly boasts of her dominion over
a multitude of people and nations in church and
state, and flatters herself in her own conceit, saying,
in her vain and haughty mind, like *Babylon* of
old, which was called the *Lady of kingdoms*, (*Ila.*
xlvi. 3, 8.) I sit with imperial majesty, pomp, and
safety, after the manner of a mighty queen in her
most exalted state, and firmest establishment; and I
neither am bereaved of any dignity, power, or plea-
sure, like a widow deprived of her defence and strength,
glory and comfort in the loss of her husband; nor shall
my throne ever be shaken, or any kind of tribulation
come upon me.

8 Therefore shall
her plagues come
in one day, death,
and mourning, and
famine: and she
shall be utterly
burnt with fire:
for strong is the
Lord

8 Because she is thus insolent and vain-glorious,
and fondly imagines that no mischief or danger can
approach her; therefore shall her punishment and
ruin come unexpectedly, and all on a sudden, as it were
in one day, upon her; as was said of the ancient *Ba-
bylon*: (*Ila. xlvii. 9, 11.*) Death, by pestilence, or
sword, or both, shall cut off multitudes of her sub-
jects;

God who judges her, and her children, and destruction by famine, or the want of all necessary refreshment and support, shall meet upon her; and she shall be utterly consumed by fire: (chap. xvii. 16.) For the Lord Jehovah, who righteously judges and condemns her, and has determined to destroy her, is almighty; so that there is no resisting his power, who is able to execute the decreed vengeance, and will certainly do it.

9 And so absolute and unavoidable shall her destruction be, that the earthly-minded princes and potentates of this world, who, continuing under her jurisdiction and in her communion, have complied with and supported her idolatrous injunctions and practices, and indulged themselves in pomp and luxury with her, shall not be able to give her any further assistance, or protection; but shall bitterly mourn over her helpless state, and lament her doleful distress and ruin, when they shall behold the sad tokens of her torment and desolation, as appearing like horrid pillars of smoke, that rise up from a raging fire in the conflagration of cities*; and especially when they see *Rome* itself, the seat of her dominion, all in flames through the righteous vengeance of God upon her.

10 They being dismayed at this awful judgment, and terribly afraid lest they should fall with her in the common calamity, and so partake of her plagues, as they had of her sins, will endeavour to get as far as possible out of the way of danger; and standing at a distance, like spectators full of confusion and astonishment, will cry out in the anguish of their souls, Alas! alas! What dreadful and unexpected woe and misery is this! What desolation and distress is that great city, which is called mystical *Babylon*, that strong and powerful city, now brought into! What is become of all her authority, pomp, and dominion, which are fallen with her! What an amazing revolution is here! For all on a sudden, as it were in one hour, that was little thought of before, thy judgment, condemnation, and execution, are come upon thee, O thou mistress of the papal world, who *satest as a queen* in

NOTE

* The smoke of her torment, may be probably, be destroyed, either by sub-taken, as in the paraphrase, either in the tetracontas fires bursting out of the metaphorical sense to signify the most dreadful and entire destruction of all her pomp and power, through the whole extent of the papacy; or in the literal sense for the conflagration of *Rome*, the seat of the Pope's authority, and the capital city of his dominion, which will, when the ten kings shall have the word, and burn her with fire; (chap. xviii. 18.) or by fire immediately from heaven, like that which consumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*.

in all thy grandeur and boasted security, saying, I shall see no sorrow. (ver. 7.)

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more :

11 And as the merchants bewailed the destruction of ancient Tyre, that mighty flourishing and trading city ; (Ezek. xxvii. 37, &c.) so the earthly-minded dealers in the spiritual merchandize of antichristian Rome, to put off her indulgences, absolutions, popish relics, and preferments, will, in the grief of their hearts, lament with weeping over her, as not being able to afford her any relief in the day of her distress, nor to get any further advantages by her ; because there will then be an entire end of all her gainful traffic ; and from thence forward none will ever be so imposed upon and deluded, as to purchase her ecclesiastical commodities any more.

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

12 So that they can no longer delight and pride themselves in the prodigious gains that they were wont to make by this sort of merchandize * : It will never bring them in, as formerly, gold and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, to enrich themselves, and to support and display the splendor of their hierarchy and worship ; nor fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, to adorn themselves, and make distinguishing vestments for their priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes ; nor thyine wood, so much esteemed for its grateful scent and durable strength, for building or decorating magnificent houses and temples ; nor any of those various sorts of vessels made of ivory, and of the most beautiful and costly wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, which used to be wrought into idolatrous images, and into all manner of utensils for superstitious services and ornaments.

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses,

13 Nor shall their merchandize any longer procure to them fragrant cinnamon, and sweet odours, and ointments, and frankincense, to gratify their senses, and perfume and beautify their bodies, or to feed their pride and luxury, and make their sweet-smelling incense and costly ointments for idolatrous and superstitious purposes ; nor wine and oil, to cheer their hearts

N O T E.

* The description given in this and the following verses of the merchandize and lamented destruction of the *Romish Babylon*, need not in all particulars be taken in a literal, but only in an accommodated sense, like what is suggested in the paraphrase ; and may be considered as a strong and striking figurative representation of her downfall from all her former state and affluence, and of the horrible disappointment, loss, and trouble, which by that means will come up-

on the popish traffickers, in her egregious impositions and delusions, who had amassed to themselves vast riches and honours in the days of her prosperity : And this is beautifully described in most of the very same terms that are used in the 26th and 27th chapters of *Ezekiel*, with relation to Tyre, which had been notorious for idolatry, wickedness, and power, and for the most gainful and extensive merchandize.

warfare, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

hearts and make their faces shine, or to be idolatrously and superstitiously used in the sacrifice of the mafs, and in extreme unction; nor fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, to be tithed by the priests for the fuf-tenance of nature, or fupplying them with the neceffaries, much lefs the conveniences and comforts of the animal life; nor horses and chariots, and (expectant) the bodies of men to furnifh out a pompous equipage, and fhew away with the magnificence of haughty popes and prelates; nor fhall they any more enslave ment fouls by ufurping a tyrannical power over their confciences, and drawing money from them for pardons and indulgences, and for praying them out of purgatory, which, in reality, is being paid for deftroying, inftead of faving their fouls.

14 And the fruits that thy foul lufted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou fhalt find them no more at all.

14 And the products of your iniquitous merchandife, O myftical *Babylon*, in which you fo much gloried, and of which you were fo eagerly defirous, fuch as the riches, honour, and pleasures of this world, which were the top of your ambition; all thefe are now cut off: And all things that were delicious to the tafte, and made a gay appearance to the eye, are now removed far from you, who fhall never find your account in them any more; but fhall be entirely ftript, and remain deftitute of them all, paff retrieve for ever. Thus all the merchandife of antichriftian *Rome*, by the factors of her fpurious wares, fhall, like that of the ancient wicked *Tyre*, utterly fail, and never be recovered.

15 The merchants of thefe things, which were made rich by her, fhall ftand afar off, for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing.

15 They that dealt in thefe commodities, and were enriched in their temporal, and vainly boafed of their being fo in their *fpiritual* concerns, by her means, fhall, like the kings of the earth, (ver. 9, 10.) unable to help her, remove and keep at as great a diftance as may be from her, for fear that, as they had been partakers of her guilt and riches, they fhould fhare in torments with her; at the very fight of which, they will vent the frowns of their hearts with floods of tears, and great lamentation over her.

16 And faying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and fcarlet, and decked with gold, and precious ftones, and pearls; for in one hour fo great riches is come to nought.

16 And crying out, with bitter aftonifhment and condolence, will fay, Alas! alas! How tremendous is the deftruction of *Rome*, that great and famous city, where the head of the papacy, who *faid in her heart, I fit a queen, and fhall fee no forrow*, (ver. 7.) had her imperial feat; and in the height of her pomp, power, and riches, was fumptuoufly arrayed in fine linen, and purple, and fcarlet, and fet off with the glittering ornaments of gold, and all manner of precious ftones, and pearls! Her cafe is extremely deplorable: For all on a fudden, as though it were in one unexpected and unthought-of hour, ſhe is divested of all

her

for God hath avenged you on her. just occasion of great joy and gladness to the saints, while they consider it, not as the destruction of their *fellow-creatures*; but as the day of their own happy deliverance from the oppressions of this antichristian-enemy, and of God's glorifying himself in her righteous overthrow, and in erecting the glory of Christ's kingdom on her ruins: Triumph ye therefore over her, O church of Christ, both in heaven and on earth, and all ye holy apostles and prophets, that have ministerially laid the foundation upon which the church is built, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone*; (Eph. ii. 20.) and be exceeding glad, O all ye faithful pastors and teachers, whom he has sent; and all ye interpreters of his word, whom he has raised up to preach and explain his pure gospel, as his witnesses who have prophesied in sackcloth: (*chap. xi. 3.*) For now God has awfully displayed his terrible justice, and the truth of his predictions, (*chap. xvi.*) in taking full vengeance, for your sakes, upon this corrupt and persecuting power, which vain would have destroyed the foundation of the church itself, and all that are built upon it.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. 21 And still further to confirm all this, as the prophet *Jeremiah* was ordered to bind a stone to the book he had read, and cast it into the midst of *Euphrates*, saying, *Thus shall Babylon sink, and shall not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her*; (*Jer. li. 63, 64.*) so a glorious angel, who excelled in strength, took up, as he appeared in my vision, a huge stone in his hand, like a great millstone, and threw it with mighty force into the depth of the sea, into which it suddenly sunk, never to rise again: And, to explain the meaning of this emblematical action, he said, After this violent manner, shall that great city, mystical *Babylon*, and all her power, authority, and magnificence, be suddenly cast into utter destruction, and never shall be rebuilt, or recover strength and dominion, or have any place in the world at all, from henceforth for ever.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; 22 And as to you, O mystical *Babylon*, according to what was threatened against apostate *Israel*, (*Jer. xxv. 10.*) all your days of superstitious and civil mirth and pleasure shall come to a perpetual end: No concerts of players upon harps and other musical instruments, nor any melody of pipes and trumpets shall ever be heard in your churches, or in your merry meetings any more; and all your spiritual traffic and secular trade and business, together with all your choristers, that adulterate the worship of God; and all your cunning artificers, and laborious workmen, such as carpenters, and smiths, (*Isa. iii. 3.* and *Jer. xxiv. 1.*)

to serve the common conveniences of mankind, shall be taken away from you; and even the necessities of life shall fail, insomuch that the noise of a millstone, to grind the corn for food and sustenance, shall never more be heard in you.

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

23 And nothing comfortable of any kind shall ever be enjoyed any more; no, not so much as the light of a candle, to relieve the horrid darkness of the night, shall ever be seen in you again; much less shall any bridal lamp or nuptial songs, or rejoicings of a bridegroom over his bride, or propagating of families and inheritances, be ever found any more in you: For your dealers in spiritual merchandise enriched themselves, and became the great and dignified men of your earthly empire, such as cardinals and prelates, by means of the iniquitous trade which they carried on to promote your authority and influence: For, by your bewitching allurements, all nations under your dominion were imposed upon, and deluded into an admiration of, and compliance with your superstition and idolatry.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

24 And, what greatly adds to all these provocations of mystical *Babylon*, and aggravates her crimes, condemnation, and misery, and aloud proclaims the righteousness of God's judgments upon her, is, that she has filled up the measure of the cruelties and murders, which have been practised upon the faithful ministering servants and holy people of God; and upon all that by her authority, canons, and decrees, have ever been put to death for righteousness sake, throughout her territories, and to the utmost extent of her influence upon earth, as by her persecutions she has approved of, imitated, and exceeded all that were ever known before; and so the blood of all martyrs for Christ is found in her skirts, and, by just construction, is chargeable upon her: (See *Matth.* xxiii. 29, — 35.) And therefore God has given her blood to drink; for she is worthy. (Chap. xvi. 6.)

RECOLLECTIONS

How certain, sudden, and irrecoverable will be the destruction of the seat of the haughty *Rome*, and of the whole papal power with her! She is the mystical *Babylon*, whose fall, as it were in one hour, was pronounced by an illustrious angel, and further confirmed by the emblem of a vast stone plunged with violence into the sea, from whence it never can rise again. How dreadful and total will her ruin be! She who flourished in pomp, luxury, and plenty, and thought she sat as a queen and should feel no sorrow, shall become desolate, like a horrid uninhabited wilderness, haunted by demons, and doleful birds, and savage beasts. All her pride, riches, and luxury, shall be turned into shame, want, and misery; all her joy into mourning, and all her pleasure into torment. She shall be stript of all her greatness and sumptuous ornaments, and cut off from all the comforts, conveniences, and necessities of life; and all ranks of people under her dominion shall be reduced to the utmost poverty and distress; and she shall be repaid with the

heaviest

leavest vengeance from God for all the wrath that she had reeked upon his faithful servants and people. The tokens of her torment shall be as visible and affecting, as the thick and fiery smoke that ascends from the ruins of a city all in flames: And when her friends that had supported her, and had been profited, to a greater or less degree, in temporal concerns, by the sale of her indulgences and pardons, and other spiritual commodities, by which she deceived the nations, and drew them into superstition and idolatry; when these shall see her sudden, miserable, and utter desolation, they shall be astonished, and bitterly lament over her, as unable to help her, or to be helped by her any more; and shall strive to get as far as they can out of the way of God's judgments upon her, lest they should be swallowed up in her calamities, as they had been partakers of her sin. And O how righteously will these judgments be executed upon her, whose enormous and multiplied iniquities are heaped up, as it were, to heaven, and cry aloud for vengeance to come down upon her! Her superstition, lewdness and idolatry, luxury and haughtiness, cruelty and persecution of the saints and servants of Christ; her merchandise of the souls, as well as bodies of men, to their destruction; her allurements of kings and nations to forsake God, and join themselves to idols, shall all be remembered in his wrath, to her everlasting confusion. With what abhorrence should all the people of God separate from her communion, lest they partake of her sins, and of her punishments! And how should they rejoice and triumph, in reflection that the time is coming, when God will vindicate his righteous cause, and avenge them, in her just destruction, and will deliver them from all her molestations for ever!

C H A P. XIX.

The church both in heaven and on earth triumph, and praise the Lord for his righteous judgments upon the great whore of Babylon, and for the honour of their own espousal to Christ, 1.—8. An angel pronounces them blessed, and refuses the worship which John offered him, 9, 10. Then follows another vision of Christ, as going forth on a white horse at the head of his army, which is also mounted on white horses, to make war against the beast and his armies, which are utterly and miserably destroyed, 11.—21.

PARAPHRASE.

AND after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

AND after the preceding visions of the total ruin of the great whore of Babylon, in the downfall of the papal chief city and empire, methought, I heard an exceeding loud and joyful acclamation of the heavenly church, saying, in obedience to the order, (*chap. xviii. 20.*) *Hallelujah, Praise ye the Lord; We applaud, and call upon all the saints on earth to join with us in blessing the Lord our God for the happiness of his people, in their complete deliverance from the corruptions and tyranny of the antichristian church. The glory, honour, and power, which are conspicuous in all God's works of creation, providence, and redemption, and particularly in this remarkably glorious dispensation, ought to be ascribed, with the greatest veneration and cheerfulness, to his holy name.*

For true and righteous are his judgments.

For he has faithfully fulfilled his promises to his people, as well as proved himself to be true to his threatnings

judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise

threatnings against his and their enemies; and has acted a most righteous part in the punishment he has denounced against, and inflicted upon them: For he has condemned, and executed judgment upon antichristian-Rome, (which may be compared to a great strumpet) and upon all her lovers, for the iniquity of her doings, and for their compliance with her allurements, who had spread idolatrous fornication throughout her territories on the earth, and thereby corrupted the religion and manners of her subjects: And now God has taken just vengeance upon her for all the blood of his saints and ministering servants, which she has unrighteously and cruelly caused to be shed, on account of their faithfulness to him; and he has requited her, in kind, according to her deserts.

3 And they repeated their Hallelujahs, * beginning, carrying on, and ending their song, with joyous and triumphant thanksgivings and praises, for the utter dissolution of the idolatrous and persecuting power of Rome. And the perpetuity and misery of her overthrow, never to revive any more, was represented by the emblem of horrible smoke from the unquenchable fire that consumed her, as incessantly ascending from her ruins to an endless eternity.

4 Then the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, the representatives of the church, and of gospel-ministers, (see the notes on chap. iv. 4, 6.) prostrated themselves with the profoundest reverence, and paid their adorations and praises to the great God, who appeared as seated on his imperial throne, saying, We heartily join with the general assembly, (ver. 1.) in their hymn of praise, for the judgments which thou hast executed upon this antichristian-power; and in testimony of our high approbation of, and concurrence with, all the ascriptions of honour to thee on that important occasion, we add our Amen: Hallelujah, praised be the Lord!

5 Soon after this I heard a voice, which seemed to be uttered by a glorious angel, and to come forth immediately from before the throne of God in heaven,

NOTE

* *Hallelujah* is a most lively and comprehensive expression of praise, often used, and translated, *Praise ye the Lord*, in the *Psalms*; the five last of which, with several others, begin and end, as this heavenly hymn doth, with that word: And several expositors have thought that this being originally a Hebrew word, retained in this song of praise, intimates that, upon the destruction of Rome, which

may probably be by fire, (see the note on chap. xviii. 9.) the *Jesus* shall be converted, who were prejudiced against Christianity, all along before, by the idolatry and persecutions of the papacy; and that they are here called upon to join with the *Gentile* church, in praising the Lord for this wonderful and entire destruction of the Romish antichristian-power.

Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

ven,* saying to the church-militant on earth, Exalt, adore, and bless the name of our gracious God, who has faithfully performed his promises to you, O all ye his true worshippers, that love and serve him, and reverence and fear his holy Majesty, whether ye be of high or low degree, or whatever be your rank and attainments of a religious or civil nature.

6 And, according to this divine command, methought, I instantly heard an innumerable company, even all that feared the Lord, both small and great, joining with the utmost alacrity in acclamations of joy and praise, on account of the glorious and happy state of the church on earth, consequent to the overthrow and punishment of all antichristian-powers; (*chap. xx. 1.—6.*) and the sound of their united voices was, for strength and loudness, like the noise of vast cataracts of water, or even the roaring of the sea, and the strongest claps of thunder, saying, *Hallelujah*; We exult and triumph, and call upon all others to praise the Lord: For now in a more eminent and glorious manner, than ever before, the Almighty Jehovah, the ever living and true God,† to whose empire the whole creation is subject, manifests his great power and glory in his ruling over all; and has set up his kingdom of grace in our world with the greatest majesty, light, and liberty, purity, peace, and extensive dominion, to the confusion of his enemies, and the joy of his saints.

NOTES.

7 Let

* A voice came out from the throne, is not here to be understood as the immediate voice of God himself: For he could not properly say, *Praise our God, all ye that fear him*. Nor do I apprehend it to have been the immediate voice of Christ: For though he, as man and Mediator, called his disciples his brethren, and sent a message to them, saying, (*John xx. 17.* see the paraphrase there) *Ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God*; yet he there expressed his own and their relation to God distinctly, in such a manner, as reserved the pre-eminence to himself. However, admitting that Christ, as the head of the church, might have called upon them, saying, without any impropriety, *Praise our God*; yet the person who uttered this voice seems to be the same that ordered the apostle John to write, *Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb*, and that refused the worship which John offered to pay him, under some mistake; (*ver. 9, 10.*) whereas our blessed Lord

never refused religious homage from any, (which was always his due as God) even while he was in his state of humiliation upon earth; much less can it be supposed that he would refuse it in his state of exaltation in heaven. I therefore take this voice to have been pronounced by a created angel, who was near the throne of God, and was probably either the angel by whom Christ signified the things contained in this prophecy to his servant John; (*chap. i. 1.*) or the angel who had shewn unto him the judgment of the great whore. (*Chap. xvii. 1.*)

† The Lord God omnipotent reigns, may be considered with relation to the Father, or to the Son, who is also the mighty God, (*1st. ix. 6.*) and I think is styled the Lord God Almighty, *Rev. xi. 17.* (See the note there.) Accordingly, the kingdom here spoken of is the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ; and is called the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ, *chap. x. 15.* and *xii. 10.*

Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

7 Let us now indulge a sacred pleasure and delight in him, and pay all honour, thanksgiving, and praise to him: For the happy time is now come publicly and visibly to solemnize the espousal of Christ to his church, (*2 Cor. xi. 2.*) whom he has redeemed to his Father, and purchased for himself, with his own precious blood, as *the Lamb that was slain*; (chap. v. 9, 12.) and she being joined in a marriage-covenant with him, who *rejoices over her, as a bridegroom over the bride*,* (*Isa. lxii. 5.*) is now cheerfully waiting in a prepared state and frame to meet her bridegroom, and enter into his joy.

8 And that she might be suitably adorned for his reception, it was graciously vouchsafed to her that, as grand bridegrooms use to make presents of rich attire to their brides of inferior character, that they may make a becoming appearance at the celebration of their nuptials; so she should be beautifully decked, at her husband's expence, with the most excellent ornaments; which may be compared to the finest linen that is spotless and bright, a lively emblem of honour, favour, and acceptance, and of purity, and holiness: For the fine linen signifies (*δικαιοσύνη*) the righteousness both of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ to intitle her to heavenly bliss, and of sanctification by his Spirit to make her meet for enjoying it; both of which are put upon all the saints, like *garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness, and the wedding garment*. (*Isa. lxi. 10.* and *Matth. xxii. 11, 12.*)

9 Then the angel, who had uttered the voice from the heavenly throne, (see the note on *ver. 5.*) applied himself directly to me, saying, In consideration of what you have now heard, write down, for the standing use of the church under all tribulations, that they, and they only, are substantially and securely blessed; and shall be so for ever, who are effectually called by divine grace, and admitted to all spiritual entertainments and delights, which may be figured out by the marriage-feast, that the Lamb of God has made for his bride. (*Luke xiv. 15, 16.*) And he, who talked with me, further said, This, and all other things revealed in your visions, are the infallible truths of God, and shall certainly have a punctual accomplishment in their season, according to his word. (*Chap. xxi. 5.* and *xxii. 6.*)

10 Upon

N O T E.

* Dr. More and Mr. Mede suppose, that the marriage of the Lamb, and his wife's son, refused to come; but now, being ready and prepared, made haste to come.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him: and he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

10 Upon hearing these great and comfortable things from the angel, who appeared in such an illustrious and majestic form, as seemed like that of the Angel of the covenant, I, in a transport of admiration and joy, prostrated myself at his feet to pay him divine honours, as the Son of God: But he hastily stopped me short, and, correcting my mistake, said to me, in like manner as the apostles *Peter, Paul, and Barnabas* did to those that offered them religious worship, (*Acts* x. 25, 26. and xiv. 13,—15.) Take heed what ye do: * This sort of worship must not be paid to me, who, though a glorified spirit, am not a divine person, but only one of your fellow-servants and brethren in my present employment, who am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to make known to you the things that relate to his person, cause, and government, and to the revolutions he will make in the church and in the world, as you also are to communicate them to others. (*Chap.* i. 1, 2.) Let all your religious worship be reserved for, and paid only to God, to whom alone it is due; (*Matth.* iv. 10.) and by no means to me: For the testimony I have borne to Jesus, the Saviour, is dictated to me by the same Divine Spirit, who inspired the ancient prophets, and who by me now reveals to you the future events contained in your visions, that you may convey them to the church for their support and comfort: And therefore religious adoration is no more due from you to me, than from me to you; and so he rectified my mistake.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold,

11 In my next prophetic vision, methought, I saw heaven itself opened, from whence the Saviour came forth,

N O T E

* The worship which *John* offered to this glorious angel, (see the note on ver. 5.) seems not to have been merely *civil respect*, but of a *religious* nature: For there was no reason why the angel should refuse to accept of *civil respect*; and his ordering the apostle to pay that very sort of worship to God, which he was about to offer him, (*chap.* xxii. 9.) was surely more than *civil honour*, which is infinitely beneath God's acceptance, and would be to put him upon a level with some exalted creature.—It may indeed seem strange, that the apostle *John* should, after this rebuke, so far forget himself, as to attempt such an idolatrous act a second time, as in *chap.* xxii. 3. but it is to be considered, that as *Peter*, in the mount of Transfiguration, was in such an ecstacy of awful wonder and joy, that he knew not what to say; (*Mark*

ix. 6.) so the apostle *John* was in such a transport and surprise, as might not admit of calm and deliberate reflection, some time after the former rebuke, which was not quite so strong and decisive as that which followed; and this might precipitate him into the second, as it had into the first mistake. And if here was a neglect of due consideration, he might be suffered to fall into the same error again, to shew what imperfection attends the best of men in this world; and to give an opportunity for the more remarkably fixing the eternal rule of all religious worship at the cloie of the canon of the New Testament; as also for the more strongly condemning the worship of saints and angels, and guarding the people of God against it, which the Spirit of prophecy foresaw would notoriously prevail in the antichristian church of Rome.

behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

forth, with divine majesty and glory, to espouse the cause of his people in the most effectual manner against their antichristian enemies; and, behold, a figurative representation of a white horse appeared to my view, such as generals were wont to ride in solemn triumphs; which may be considered as an emblem of the everlasting gospel, that should prevail more extensively and successfully, than ever before, with light and purity, speed and power, in its last promulgation through the earth: And he, who appeared as riding prosperously upon it to guide and govern its course, was the Lord Christ, the Captain of salvation, who is, ever was, and will be, and may justly be called, and in this glorious dispensation will eminently appear to be, faithful and true to his Father, who appointed him, and to all those that put their trust in him; faithful in performing his promises to them, and true in executing his threatenings upon his and their adversaries: And his procedure is with righteous judgment in taking the part of his church against his and their enemies, and in setting himself, as in battle-array, against all that oppose his cause and kingdom in the world.

11 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns: and he had a name written that no man knew but he himself;

12 The eyes of this august person appeared to be as bright and penetrating, awful, terrible, and burning, as a flame of fire; (*chap. i. 14.*) and on his head was a representation of many crowns, set, as it were, one upon another, the symbols of his natural and mediatorial authority, and universal dominion over the church and the world, in all spiritual and temporal concerns, and of his subduing all nations and things to himself: And he bore an adorable name, which, as expressive of his divine nature and perfections, and of his dignity and authority, as *the Word made flesh*, (*John. i. 1, 14.*) was so wonderful, (*11. ix. 6.*) that, like the name *Jehovah*, no mere creature knew any thing of it, till it was revealed; and even then it was so incomprehensible by any of them, that none but himself, to the exclusion of all creatures, could fully understand the deep mysteries contained in it. (*See Matth. xi. 27.*)

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The Word of God.

13 He was further represented to me, like a mighty and victorious general, as wearing a garment all over stained with the blood of his vanquished and slaughtered enemies, over whom he was to gain a complete conquest in his state of exaltation, as the reward of his obedience and sufferings unto death, when his raiment was dyed with his own blood in his state of humiliation: And one of the glorious names that properly belongs to him, and he is known by in the church, according to divine revelation, (*chap. i. 2,*

9. and John i. 1, 14.) is the eternally essential and personal, who in due time became the declarative and executive *Word of God*.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

14 And his armies, consisting not merely of the heavenly host of angels, who as ministering spirits attend him, but chiefly, if not wholly, of his ministering servants and faithful people, who are born from above, have their citizenship in heaven, and are joined in communion with the *general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven*: These, like a numerous and well-disciplined army of the called, chosen, and faithful, (chap. xvii. 14.) who had lifted as volunteers under his banner, and were headed and animated by him, appeared as marching after their glorious Leader with exceeding pomp and splendor, to make up his magnificent train, as mounted, like himself, upon white horses, the emblem of gospel-truth and purity, joy and victory; and they seemed to be richly arrayed with fine linen, bright and pure, an emblem of the *rabe of righteousness*, and garment of salvation, which, as has been said, (ver. 8.) signify the *righteousness of the saints*. The meaning of all which may be considered as pointing to such a state of peace and triumph, and of dignity and honour, like kings and priests unto God, that the church of Christ on earth should now be advanced to, as bears a near resemblance of what is enjoyed in heaven.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

15 And to assure me that the Captain of salvation would obtain his victories, not by any power of his followers, as of themselves, but entirely by his own power, as exerted either immediately, or mediately by them, I saw the appearance of a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth, an emblem of his dreadful threatnings, and of his having the power of the sword, which he would use according to his word, in taking righteous vengeance on the idolatrous, persecuting, and sinful nations, and would rule over them by his authority and power, as *with an iron sceptre*, and *dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*: (Pl. ii. 9.) And as, their iniquity being full, they were thoroughly fitted for destruction, like clusters of grapes fully ripe to be trodden and squeezed in a wine-press; so he would *tread them in his anger*, and *trample them in his fury*, (Isa. lxiii. 3.) and thereby crush them to death by terrible impressions of the heaviest wrath, which is no less than *that* of God Almighty, whose power is infinite and irresistible; and none can stand before his indignation, or abide in the *fierceness of his anger*. (Nah. i. 6.)

16 And he hath
on his vesture, and
on his thigh a name
written, KING
OF KINGS
AND LORD OF
LORDS.

17 And I saw an
angel standing in
the sun: and he
cried with a loud
voice, saying to all
the fowls that fly
in the midst of hea-
ven, Come and ga-
ther yourselves to-
gether unto the
supper of the great
God.

18 That ye may
eat the flesh of
kings, and the flesh
of captains, and the
flesh of mighty
men, and the flesh
of horses, and of
them that sit on
them, and the flesh
of all men, both
free and bond, both
small and great.

19 And this victorious avenger of his church upon
his and their enemies was further represented, as hav-
ing an inscription of another of his distinguishing ti-
tles, like a motto, wrote upon his upper raiment, and
particularly on that part of it which covered his thigh,
the place where the sword usually hangs in order to
its being drawn, (*Ps. xlv. 9.*) and where it might
be visible to all around him, importing, that he is,
and by his mighty acts soon would effectually prove
himself to be, by way of eminence, the sovereign
Lord and Ruler of all the potentates, princes, and
nobles of the earth, (far beyond what the vain-glori-
ous monarchs of the *East* could claim) to govern, in-
fluence or restrain, save or destroy them; and to do
his will, and work by and upon them, as seems best
in his sight.

17 And, the more deeply to impress me with a
sense of the dreadful, extensive, and complete devas-
tation he would make upon all his antichristian ene-
mies, I beheld an angel as illustrious and conspicuous
to the whole world, as if he stood in the midst of the
sun to be seen of all: And, with a voice strong and
loud enough to be heard far and wide, he summoned
all the ravenous birds that fly in the region of the air,
saying, in allusion to a day of general slaughter, in
which the dead bodies of the slain are exposed to be
devoured by those voracious animals. Come, and ga-
ther yourselves together, to eat the carcases of those
that fall in battle; which the *King of kings, and*
Lord of lords, (*ver. 16.*) who is the great God,
(*Tit. ii. 13.*) has prepared for you to feast upon, as
in a field all over covered with the dead bodies of van-
quished and slaughtered armies; which may be con-
sidered as Christ's call to his people on earth, by a
commissioned angel, to rejoice and triumph over them,
like his guests, invited to feast on the sacrifice, which
he would make to his wrath and justice, for their ac-
tual deliverance from the power of those that hated
and oppressed them.

18 Come ye all hither, that, to allude to an anti-
cent prophecy, (*Ezek. xxxix. 17, — 21.*) ye may re-
gale yourselves, and feed to the full on the carcases
of the wicked kings of the earth, and particularly of
the *Roman* popish empire; and of the commanders
of armies, and of men of mighty valour; and may
feast upon the flesh of war-horses and their riders; and
upon the flesh of all ranks and orders of men, which
had taken the part, and joined in the cause of anti-
christ, whether they be masters, or servants and slaves,
high or low, who shall universally fall a prey to you,
like dead bodies on the field of battle; which may

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his and their enemies was further represented, as hav-
ing an inscription of another of his distinguishing ti-
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be

be considered as a strong figurative representation of the saints rejoicing to divide the spoil, which will fall to them by the total and ignominious destruction of all their enemies, as a just retaliation for their having slain Christ's witnesses, and not suffered their dead bodies to be put in graves, but rejoiced over them in their calamitous circumstances. (*Chap. xi. 7,—10.*)

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together, to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. Then, after this summons to feast upon the slain, methought, I saw the antichristian-beast, which represented *Rome-papal*, as a persecuting power, in conjunction with the princes and potentates of the earth that supported it; and the whole *posse* of forces, consisting of all the wicked and ungodly, whether *Papists, Mahometans, or Pagans*, even all that they could muster, assembled together to engage in a vigorous and warlike opposition against the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, (who appeared as sitting on a *white horse*, ver. 11, 16.) to subvert his gospel and kingdom; and against his army of faithful servants to destroy them that followed him, as their Captain and Leader.

20 And the issue of this battle was, that the antichristian persecuting power, which under one figurative view has been represented as *the beast*, and under another, as *the false prophet*, (*chap. xvi. 13.*) who pretended to work miracles in the sight, and under the protection of the beast, and by his lying wonders imposed upon, and deluded the nations that had openly professed subjection to the beast, and, in token of it, wore its mark, (see the note on *chap. xiii. 16.*) and paid idolatrous worship to him, and to the images which he had set up as objects of religious adoration. Both these idolatrous and persecuting powers, which may be differently conceived of in their *civil and ecclesiastical capacities*, (*chap. xvi. 13.*) fell as captives into the conqueror's hands: And as the chiefs of rebellious armies, when subdued and taken prisoners, use to be most exemplarily punished; so these who were the ring-leaders in the general apostacy and severe persecutions, and in this war against Christ, and his people and cause, were grievously tormented, like persons cast alive into an abyss of fire, burning, like *Sodom and Gomorrah*, with an intense and everlasting flame, as though mingled with brimstone, to feed and maintain it with the fiercest rage, that it never might be quenched. (*Mark ix. 43,—48.*)

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out

rious

out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

rious conqueror who sat upon the white horse, (ver. 11.) even by the sharp sword, which was represented as proceeding out of his mouth, (ver. 15.) to intimate their being *destroyed by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming*: (2 Thess. ii. 8, &c.) And, according to the summons given before, (ver. 17, 18.) all the birds of prey fed upon their slain carcases, and were fully satiated with their flesh; which may signify the satisfaction that the church of Christ will have in the utter destruction of the whole power of his and their enemies, as the glory of God will be thereby manifested, and a way opened for the happiest and most glorious state of Christ's kingdom on earth, then at hand to take place.

RECOLLECTIONS.

O with what rapturous hallelujahs will the church-militant on earth join the chorus of the church-triumphant in heaven, when righteous judgment shall be executed upon all the powers of popery, and their confederate kings and nations through the world, and when the public marriage of the Lamb shall come! They will then ascribe salvation, glory, honour, and power, with joyful triumph to the Father and Son, either of which may be considered in their song of praise, as the Lord their God, even the Lord God Omnipotent, whose kingdom rules over all, as will then be uncontrollably evident; and who, in distinction from angels and all mere creatures, is the only object of religious adoration. O happy souls, that shall be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and be presented to him in robes of illustrious and spotless righteousness, as a bride richly adorned, and fully prepared for her husband! How glorious will our Lord Jesus appear, when he shall come forth, as riding on a white horse, the symbol of victory, joy, and triumph, to espouse the cause of his people, and take vengeance on the combined armies of his enemies that rose up in a rebellious war against him; and when all his true followers, as beautifully mounted and arrayed, shall march after him, as his pompous train, and sharers in the happy fruits of his conquests, which they also obtain through him! He will then be known to be the essential and declarative Word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; titles so divinely great, as can belong to none but God.—Faithfulness, truth, and righteousness run through all his dispensations; his penetrating wisdom and universal dominion, his just indignation, and awful government and executions will then be eminently manifested, as signified by flames of fire darting from his eyes, by many crowns on his head, by a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth, by his raiment sprinkled with the blood of his adversaries, and by his ruling them with a rod of iron, and treading them, as ripe for destruction, in the wine-press of the fierce wrath of God Almighty.—Ah! dismal havoc, that will then be made upon all the enemies of truth and righteousness, of what rank or degree soever, like carcases slain, and left unburied on a field of battle! The beast and the false prophet, all the tyrannical and idolatrous powers of the Papacy, shall be exemplarily punished, like the chief leaders of a rebellion, that are thrown alive, into a sulphurous lake of unquenchable fire; and their whole army shall miserably perish. Then all the saints shall be summoned to seize the spoils of war, to their full satisfaction, like the fowls of the air that feed upon the dead bodies of men, as their prey. Bless the Lord, O all ye servants that fear him, small and great; for all these are the true sayings of God, testified by the Spirit of prophecy to an angel, and to an apostle, who are only fellow-servants and brethren in ministering them to us, for our support and comfort under all present tribulations, which shall certainly end in a glorious state of peace, purity, and all prosperity to the church. *Hallelujah!*

C H A P. XX.

An angel descends from heaven, who binds and shuts up Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, during which the church reigns with Christ in a glorious state on earth, 1,—6. Satan is loosed again for a little while to deceive the nations once more, and, gathering all his forces together, makes his last effort against Christ and his church, which issues in their own final and irretrievable overthrow, and in the eternal torment of the devil, together with the beast and the false prophet, 7,—10. Hereupon the general judgment of the great day is described, in which all the dead are gathered before Christ on his throne, the books are opened, and they are judged; and all, that are not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented for ever, 11,—15.

PERIOD IV.

TEXT.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions of the destruction of the papal power and all its adherents, at the end of twelve hundred and sixty years reign of the beast, methought, I saw a glorious angel descend, as with a commission from the throne of God in heaven, and as bearing two emblems of divine authority, which carried an intimation of his being the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Angel of God's presence, who had been represented, as *having the keys of hell and death, and the key of David to shut and open without controul, and as casting out the great dragon*; (chap. i. 18. and iii. 7. and xii. 7,—9.) and who came to *destroy the devil*, as well as *his works*. (Heb. ii. 14. and 1 John iii. 8.) Accordingly the emblems, with which he now appeared, were the key of hell, that horrible abyss (*nevous*) of darkness, misery, and despair, in one hand, and a large strong chain, for binding criminals, in the other; to signify his irresistible power to open the gate of that bottomless pit, and then shut and lock it fast upon those that are cast into it; and to bind up all the force of the devil and his accomplices at pleasure.

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

2 Then, to execute his commission, he, as seemed to me, arrested and seized upon the great dragon, who had been described in a former vision, (chap. xii. 9.) as the *old serpent*, whose names by which he is most commonly known, are *the devil* and *Satan*; the first of which signifies a *slanderer* or *false accuser*; and the second an *adversary*, as this wicked spirit most emphatically is, both of God and his people: And the

the Angel of his presence restrained this evil one from doing any mischief, either by seduction or violence, for a very long space of time *, which may be called a thousand years, whether meant precisely of just so many, or indefinitely for a great number of years.

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that, he must be loosed a little season.

3 And the angel threw him down into the great unfathomable deep of confinement and horror, (*Mat. viii. 29. and Luke viii. 31.*) and shut him up as a close prisoner in hell, as in a dark and dismal dungeon: and kept him in safe custody there, the emblem of which was setting a seal over him, in allusion to the custom of securing doors by a seal, like what was set on the stones that were laid at the mouth of the lions' den, and of Christ's sepulchre; (*Dan. vi. 17. and Matth. xxvii. 66.* see the note there.) And all this was done to the end that the great adversary, the devil, might no longer, as in times past, go about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, (*1 Pet. v. 8.*) nor might delude and mislead the nations of the earth, as formerly, into iniquity, error, and persecution, till those thousand years (*xx. xxi. vii.*) should be expired; and after that, (*ver. 1. 8.*) according to divine appointment and permission, his restraint must be taken off for a very short space of time, compared with his former dominion, and with the thousand years of his confinement; the issue of all which will be to his greater confusion, and the Saviour's greater glory.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped

4 Upon the forementioned deliverance of the church of Christ from all disturbance by the efforts of Satan, I saw an appearance of glorious thrones, and of persons seated with honour and dignity upon them, to whom the authority of ruling over their enemies, and exercising ecclesiastical and civil jurisdiction was committed, and for whom righteous judgment had, at length, been given against all those that had unjustly reproached, persecuted, and oppressed them: And I beheld a representation of the souls † of those, who,

NOTES.

* The term *thousand* is often used in prophetic style in an indefinite sense, for a large and perfect number, as in *Deut. i. 11. and vii. 9. and xxxii. 30. Psal. xc. 4. and xci. 7. and cv. 5. Eccles. vi. 6. Isa. xlii. 17. and lx. 22. and 1 Pet. iii. 8.* with several other places; and it is left to the reader's judgment to take it either in the *indefinite*, or the *strictly literal* sense. But some have imagined (I think without sufficient ground) that the 1000 years are to be resolved into days, and

that each day is to be taken for a year, which would make the duration of this period about 365,000 years.

† The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus may be considered as meant, not of the individual persons that suffered martyrdom for his sake, but of their successors in the same spirit, who being of the same temper for faith, patience, zeal, and fortitude, and professing the same doctrine with the martyrs, were one body with them;

and the beast, nei- as one society, with their predecessors, may be said to
ther his image, nei- have suffered martyrdom by being beheaded, or put
ther

NOTE

them; and so in the style of prophecy might be spoken of, as though they were the same persons, in like manner is *John the Baptist* is called *Elias*, because he came in the spirit and power of *Elias* (*Matth. xi. 14.* and *xviii. 12.* compared with *Luke i. 17.*) and as *Rome-an* christianism is in several places of this prophecy called *Sodom*, *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, on account of its being like them in sterility, pride, luxury, and cruelty; and the two witnesses, that were to prophesy in sackcloth 1260 days of years, (*chap. xi. 3.*) could not mean the same individual persons, but a succession of them that persisted in the same faith and profession: (see also the note on *1 Thess. ii. 3.*) When therefore it is said, *The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years*, this may be taken, according to prophetic style, in a metaphorical sense, and may signify a succession of such, in like manner as the two witnesses being killed, and their dead bodies rising and standing on their feet, is to be understood *chap. xi. 7, 11.*; and as the restoration of *Israel* from their captivity is called their *living and standing on their feet*, and God's opening their graves, and causing them to come out of their graves; (*Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10, 12.*) and as the conversion of the Jews in the last days is spoken of, as *life from the dead*. (*Rom. xi. 15.*) Accordingly the saints *living and reigning with Christ*, may relate to their abundance of spiritualities, purity and glory, light, love and joy, tranquillity and safety, and to the power of civil magistracy, as being in their hands, and exercised with great authority and success, for suppressing all iniquity and profaneness, and promoting true religion and holiness in those happy days.—I am not sensible that many learned and pious men have put a literal construction on this prophecy, to denote a proper resurrection of the dead bodies of former martyrs, and (as some of them think) of all other departed saints; and they accordingly suppose that their dead bodies shall be raised to life, and reign in a glorious manner with Christ, as personally and visibly sitting on his throne, for a thousand years upon earth. But as I can scarce think that the corporal presence of Christ will be removed for a thousand years from hen-

ven to this earth; so a literal resurrection of all the bodies of the saints is spoken of, as in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, in order to their meeting the Lord in the air, and being with him, not on earth, but for ever in heaven. (*1 Cor. xv. 52.* and *1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.*) And after the expiration of this thousand years, and after Satan shall be loosed again for a little while at the end of them, we have an account of the general resurrection of all persons, without any exception, or the least hint that the martyrs, or any other saints, had rose so long a time before; (*ver. 12, 13.* of this chapter.) (See the notes there.) And as a proper resurrection is never expressed in Scripture by the reviving or living again of the soul, but only of the body; so it seems extremely forced to understand the *living again of the immortal souls* of them that were beheaded, as descriptive of a literal resurrection; and a resurrection of the bodies of glorified saints to live on earth for a thousand years, seems inconsistent with the sublimer felicity and honour that their souls were possessed of before in heaven, and with their being liable to be deceived, in case Satan had not been restrained, as also with the trouble that must necessarily arise to them from the vigorous opposition which he and his army would make against them at the expiration of the thousand years, in which he was bound. It must likewise be an exceeding debasement of their refined dignity and delight in the immediate presence of Christ on his heavenly throne, to exchange them for any pleasures or honours upon the earth, especially if (as some *Millenarians* imagine) they are to be entertained with any sensitive enjoyments. (See *Dr. Whitty on the Millennium*, and *Mr. Durbam's lectures*, introductory to his exposition of this chapter.) I therefore rather incline to think that, according to the style of prophecy, and particularly in this book, which is figurative, all this relates, not literally to the resurrection of the martyrs or other saints, and the personal reign of Christ for a thousand years on earth; but figuratively, and in a spiritual sense, for glorious days of long continuance to the church on earth, whether for the precise number of a thousand years, or not. (See the note on *ver. 2.*)

they had received
his mark upon
their foreheads, or
in their hands; and
and they lived and
reigned with Christ
a thousand years.

But the rest
of the dead lived
not again until
the thousand years
were finished. This
is the first resurrec-
tion.

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tion.

There is mention,
(says Mr. Low-
man) in this prophecy, of two sorts of
dead persons; those who were slain for
the witness of Jesus, and those that
were slain by the sword of him that sat
on the horse. As here is an account of
the death of faithful Christians by their
persecutors, and of their persecutors
themselves by Christ, these persecutors

to other cruel deaths for the sake of their faithful tes-
timony to Christ, as the only Saviour, and to the
written word of God, as the only rule of faith, wor-
ship, and obedience; and who had maintained their
integrity with the spirit, faith, and patience of mar-
tyrs, without submitting, through fear of tortures or
death, to the authority of the Pope, or paying reli-
gious homage to him, or to any idols of his setting
up; and had neither promoted nor owned the power
of the antichristian beast, as though they had been
distinguished by bearing his badge upon their fore-
heads, or their hands. (See the note on chap. xii.
16.) And these, together with their successors of
the same spirit, lived as a spiritual and political body
in a much happier state than ever before; and, the
Jews being converted, and the fulness of the Gentiles
brought in, they, who before had suffered with
Christ, (Rom. viii. 17. and 2 Tim. xi. 12.) now
reigned with him on earth, under him, and by virtue
of his powerful influence, and of their relation to him,
in a glorious state of rest, love and peace, of light,
liberty and holiness, of victory and dominion over
their enemies, and of all manner of prosperity and
safety, during the forementioned thousand years, in
which Satan was bound, and shut up in prison, that
neither he, nor his instruments might deceive or an-
noy them.

But as to the rest who, in contradistinction to
these, had worshipped the beast, &c. and were the
remnant that were slain with the sword of him that
sat on the horse; (chap. xix. 21.) * they were so en-
tirely subdued, that they lost all their power and au-
thority, and had no successors of the same wicked and
active spirit and temper to survive them, till the thou-
sand years of the saints living and reigning with Christ
were expired; and so, during this glorious period,
the antichristian persecuting party will be reduced to
a political death, as the witnesses prophesying in sack-
cloth had been before: And then the church of Christ
will be so exceedingly happy and prosperous in all its
temporal and spiritual concerns, as may justly be es-
teemed, in a metaphorical sense, a resurrection from
the

N. O. T. E.
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the dead, as the restoration of *Israel* from their captivity, and the general conversion of the *Jews* are described. (*Ezek. xxxvii. 10, 12.* and *Rom. xi. 15.*) This glorious state of the church in the *Millenium* may well be called *the first resurrection*, as it will precede, and may be considered as a *figure* of the resurrection of the body afterwards unto eternal life.

6 That man is richly blessed of God, and effectually sanctified by his Spirit, that shall share in all the honours and delights of this *first resurrection* to a state of freedom from his former troubles and temptations, and of as complete happiness and conformity to the holy image of Christ, as can be enjoyed on earth, and *that*, as a certain pledge, earnest, and lively foretaste of all perfection in heaven. Though such as these may die corporally as well as the wicked, they shall not, like them, die eternally, or feel any of their miseries in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; (*chap. xxi. 8.*) which may be called *the second death*, as it comes after the death of the body: But they, in a succession of them, shall be visibly consecrated to God the Father, and to his Son Jesus Christ, as a kingdom of priests, entirely devoted to their service in the beauties of holiness, with freedom and delight; and, as has been said, (*ver. 4.*) they shall be advanced to all civil and religious dignity and authority with Christ, in a due subordination to him, their Lord and King, through the whole duration of the thousand years of that most happy state of the church on earth.

P E R I O D V.

7 And at the expiration of the thousand years, in which the saints shall triumph with glory, and meet with no disturbance from any of their enemies, their grand adversary, the devil, shall be again suffered to go forth for a little season; as out of his prison, in which he had been shut up; (*ver. 3.*) and shall try his last and utmost effort against them; their happy state on earth not being perpetually to abide, as that of the heavenly state will.

8 And Satan being released, by divine permission, from the total restraint that Christ had laid upon him for a thousand years, will then pursue his own malicious temper and designs, as he had done before, against Christ and his church, by endeavouring, once more, to delude and draw after him people of various nations, whether consisting of such formal professors, as externally fell in with the church, and durst not do otherwise, in the years of its flourishing state, but were at heart disaffected to the purity of the gospel

and the power of godliness; or consulting of such, as through enmity or fear, flew to as distant countries as they could; even all secret and open enemies to real religion, where-ever they were spread abroad, toward the East, West, North, and South, through the earth: These, for their great multitude, and for their wicked, envious, ambitious, and oppressive temper, and the utter destruction which they at last will be brought to, * may figuratively be styled *Gog and Magog*, who, as *Egypt* and *Babylon* had been before, were the last powerful and inveterate adversaries to *Israel*, according to the prophetic account of them, (*Ezek.* chap. xxxviii. and xxxix.) All these will Satan practise upon, by his artful insinuations, to assemble themselves together into one grand army, and unite their forces, by all ways and means possible, against the church, to mar its prosperity, and regain his lost power over it; and they were such a prodigious multitude, as, like the sand of the sea-shore, is innumerable.

9 And they went upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed in the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

9 And I saw in my vision, that this huge host, with Satan at their head, as their captain-general, spread themselves over the face of the earth, and particularly over the breadth of *Immanuel's* land: (*Isa.* viii. 8.) And, to allude to the encampments of *Israel* about the tabernacle in the wilderness, (*Numb.* ii. 2, &c.) they surrounded the tents of God's peculiar and holy people, in the midst of which his tabernacle was set, that they might harass and distress them: And, to allude to *Israel's* settlement afterwards at *Jerusalem*, these bold enemies encompassed the church, which, like a city, was compacted together in beautiful order, and which God had loved, and chosen and delighted to dwell in, that they might besiege and destroy it by their united attacks upon it: And while they were engaged in this daring attempt, the fire of God's wrath, like what he threatened to *Gog and Magog*, (*Ezek.* xxxviii. 22, and xxxix. 6.) came down from heaven, and utterly consumed them in the general conflagration of the last day, and in the eternal fire

N O T E

* All the guesses I have met with about the signification of *Gog and Magog*, in an application of it to any particular nation, people, or party, upon earth, or to the wicked that were politically dead, and supposed to be now raised again, appear to me so very unsatisfying, fanciful, and unlikely, that I have contented myself with such a general account, as, according to the style of prophecy, so familiarly used in this book, may answer to the character of *Gog and Magog*: For as in this book of prophecy, the anti-

christian powers were styled *Egypt* and *Babylon*, (*chap.* xi. 8. and 16, 19. and xvii. 5.) because they were ancient oppressive enemies to *Israel*; so the last enemies to the true church, after the thousand years of its prosperity, before the second coming of Christ, may be styled *Gog and Magog*, because they were the last powerful enemies to *Israel*, after their deliverance from captivity, before his first coming, as appears from the 36th, 37th, 38th, and 39th chapters of *Ezekiel*.

fire that follows it; an emblem of which had been given in the overthrow of *Sodom and Gomorrah*, as God rained fire and brimstone from heaven to destroy those wicked cities. (*Jude*, ver. 7.)

10 And the devil himself, that grand deceiver, who had influenced his subjects to combine together, and set themselves in battle-array against the church, and had headed them in their opposition to it, was thrown down from all his dominion, and plunged into a deep and large pit, which burned with the most dreadful torture, as with unquenchable fire and brimstone; where the persecuting and idolatrous papal powers, that had been represented under the figures of the beast and the false prophet, were already suffering the due reward of their abominable and complicated iniquities: (*chap. xix. 20.*) And the judgment of the great day being then at hand, to which Satan was reserved in everlasting chains of darkness, (*Jude*, ver. 6.) he shall be, not barely restrained, as he was before, for a thousand years; (*ver. 2, 3.*) but shall be exquisitely tormented, together with those his chief instruments, incessantly, without relaxation or end, in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels; (*Matth. xxv. 41.*) which may be called a lake of fire and brimstone, in allusion to the sulphureous lake, where *Sodom and Gomorrah* stood, when the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon them to destroy them. (*Gen. xix. 24, 25.*)

PERIOD VI.

11 And for the execution of divine wrath upon these ringleaders in wickedness, and upon all that lived and died under their dominion, I further beheld a magnificent throne of judgment, awfully glorious, and shining with illustrious light, and spotless purity, free from all injustice; and saw the Lord Jesus, as Judge of the whole world, seated upon it, whose appearance was so august, powerful, and tremendous, that all nature seemed to fly before him; and the former state of the earth, and of the elementary heaven passed away; which, being set on fire, were dissolved and melted with fervent heat, in order to the introduction of the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness: (*2 Pet. iii. 10, — 13.*) The present frame of things to entirely vanished, that there was no remainder of them.

12 And I saw, in this vision, all the dead, both righteous and wicked*, which were now raised from their

NOTE.

* This description of the final judgment exactly corresponds to our Lord's own

great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man

13. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man

own representation of the universal judgment, (chap. xxi. 12.) when he shall sit on the throne of his glory, and all nations shall be gathered before him, at the same time, for judgment to pass on the righteous and the wicked, according to the proof that shall then be given of their different characters; (Matth. xxv. 31.—46.) and, speaking of that solemn day, he said, *Then he shall reward every man according to his works.* (Mat. xvi. 27.) The apostle Paul also says, *that God will render to every man according to his deeds;* (Rom. ii. 6. see the note there) and that *we must all ap-*

pear before him, whether they are high or low, rich or poor, magistrates or peasants, older or younger persons, standing in the immediate presence of Christ, to be judged by him, who is God, as well as man, to whom *all judgment is committed;* (John v. 22.) and, to allude to the most accurate modes of process in human courts of judicature, methought, I saw the book of divine omniscience, in which are critically registered all the thoughts, words, and deeds, of every one; and the book of conscience, which tallies to it; and the books of the law of nature, and of the revealed law and gospel, the only rules of judgment; (Rom. ii. 12.—16.) all opened, in order to this innumerable multitude's being brought to their public and solemn trial: And another book of eternal decrees of love and grace was opened, which contained the names of all that were enrolled in heaven for eternal life, as those whom the Father had given to the Son to be redeemed, sanctified, and saved by him, on which account it may be styled *the Lamb's book of life.* (Chap. xiii. 8. and xxi. 27.) And all the dead, being raised again, were tried, together with those then alive on earth, (1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. and 1 Thess. iv. 15, —17.) and had a decisive and final sentence passed upon them, answerable to the things that were recorded in those books respectively, according to the evidence of, and in proportion to, their several works, whether good or bad, as they testified in judgment for, or against their being real Christians.

13. And this final judgment was to be absolutely universal, that not only they, that had been buried in the earth, rose out of their graves; but they also, that had been sunk and covered in the waters of the great deep, were raised by the omnipotent command of him who sat upon the throne; (ver. 11.) so that neither the earth, nor the sea, nor any repository whatsoever, could retain their bodies under the power

NOTE
year before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to what he has done, whether it be good or bad: (2 Cor. v. 10. see also 2 Thess. i. 7.—10.) It therefore is most natural to consider the dead's standing before God, and their being judged according to their works, as meant, not barely of the judgment of the wicked, but of the universal judgment of all mankind; nor is it otherwise easy to conceive why the book of life, which the wicked have no share in, is here so particularly mentioned in the process of this judgment.

man according to *ex* of death, but were forced to resign them. And their works, the souls of them that existed in a separate state, by means of death, were summoned to appear, together with their bodies, before the great Judge of all; and could be no longer held in their state of separation, to which resigned them. And all these were impartially tried, and received sentence according to the kind, and in proportion to the degree of their respective works, whether good or evil, as witnessing for or against them.

14. And from this time forward, not only death and the grave lost all their dominion; but the dead bodies of the wicked, and their souls that had before existed in a separate state, were, in execution of the sentence passed upon them, thrown with mighty vengeance into the dreadful abyss of unquenchable fire, to be tormented there for ever with the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet. (*ver.* 10. and see *Matth.* iii. 12. and *Mark* ix. 43.—48.) This may be called emphatically *the second death*, as it comes after that of the body, and is inexpressibly more terrible; and shall never end in a resurrection to eternal life.

15. And whosoever he were, that, upon the opening of the books, and the critical and all-searching trial of that solemn day according to them, was not found, by the produced evidences, to have been written in the forementioned book of life, was immediately cast into the burning lake to be tormented there for his evil deeds, as with the fire of divine wrath which never shall be quenched. But the righteous shall enter into life eternal, as will be represented in the next vision.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a glorious time of light, liberty, love and peace, purity, joy and triumph, shall the church of true believers enjoy upon earth, after many years of darkness, trouble, and oppression! The Lord Jesus will bind and shut up Satan, that old serpent, the devil, as in prison: The cause of truth and holiness shall revive with great power, spirituality, and splendor: And they, who, with the constancy, patience, and spirit of martyrs, had courageously renounced all idolatry, wickedness, and error, and maintained a good profession of Christ and of his gospel in the worst of times, shall, together with their successors of the same spirit, live and reign with him, under his protection and smiles, for a thousand years upon the earth. And O with what honour and acceptance will they then appear, like royal priests to him, and to God the Father through him! This will be a blessed revival from their former low and distressed circumstances, and be as life from the dead, before the resurrection of the body; and therefore may be figuratively called *the first resurrection*.

NOTE

* As the *Greek* word (*αὐτῶν*) commonly signifies *the state of separate spirits*, where it seems to make a much easier construction of *death and hell* being cast into the lake of fire, than any that I find, both here and in the next verse, have met with.

perdition; and they, that bear a part in this, shall be scourged from eternal misery, which is the second death. But how can it be expected an everlasting continuance of such a happy state on this earth? At the expiration of the thousand years, Satan will, in some measure, be let loose again for a little while, and be permitted to go forth, once more, to deceive the nations throughout the world, and gather all his numberless forces together from among them, who may be compared to *Egyp* and *Assyria*, those last enemies of *Israel*, to attack and disturb the saints, the beloved city of the Lord. But, blessed be God, this regained power and last effort will be very short, and certainly end in the utter destruction of the devil, and all his adherents, who shall be consumed by fire from heaven, and cast into everlasting flames with him: For Christ will sit his throne for judgment, and the present frame of the earth and aerial heaven shall be dissolved at his appearing. There here shall be a general resurrection of the dead, wherefore they were buried, in the earth or in the sea; and the final judgment of all mankind will, upon trial out of the books which shall be opened, publicly and unalterably determine the eternal state of every one of them for inexorable happiness, or misery, according to their respective works, whether they be good or bad. Then all the ungodly, whose bodies were dead, and whose souls had been in a separate state, and not found to be written in the book of life, shall, according to the just sentence passed upon them for their evil deeds, be cast into everlasting burnings. But O the happiness of the righteous; as described in the following chapter:

C H A P. XXI.

In consequence of the final judgment, the blessed state of the church triumphant is represented in general, under the figures of a new heaven and new earth, and of the New Jerusalem, where God dwells, banishes all sorrow from his people, and makes them completely happy, in opposition to the doleful state of the wicked, 1,—8. And is more particularly described in its heavenly original, lustre, and glory, secure defence and bright ornaments, under the figure of precious stones, high walls: 12 gates, guarded by 12 angels, and 12 foundations inscribed with the names of 12 apostles, 9,—14. In its beautiful structure, under the figure of an exceeding large city four square, and consisting of the richest and finest materials, 15,—21. In its consummate felicity, as irradiated with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, exclusive of all the comforts of this world, which are figured out by the light of the sun and moon, 22, 23. And in the free access of vast multitudes, of all nations and degrees, through the open gates of this city, the glory of which will swallow up all earthly honours, and the inhabitants of which are perfectly holy, 24,—27.

PERIOD VII.

TEXT.

AND I saw a
new heaven,
and a new earth:
for

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the preceding visions, which ended in the final judgment, another followed, in which I beheld the blessedness of the saints in glory*, as figured

NOTE

* Those interpreters that are for the personal reign of Christ a thousand years upon earth, and some others with them, consider the description given of the glorious

for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

gured out, like the state of the *New Testament* church, (*Isa.* lxx. 17. and lxxvi. 22.) by a new heaven and new earth; which may be so called with respect to their form and qualities, signifying an entirely new fabric, as emblems of the new state of happiness that will then be introduced: For the former elementary heaven and this earth, not with respect to their substance, as though they were to be annihilated; but with respect to their frame and use, which are suited to the accommodation of its present inhabitants, and yet become noxious by reason of the fall of man, were dissolved: And I observed, that in this new and most excellent structure there was *no sea*, as there is in this terraqueous globe: Which might intimate that, in this new blissful state, there shall be no tumultuous passions, like *the troubled sea*; (*Isa.* lvii. 20.) nor any mischievous enemies, to disturb the peace of its inhabitants, like *the beast that rose out of the sea*, (chap. xiii. 1.) or *the great whore that sat on many waters*; (chap. xvii. 1.) and so there shall be *no calamity* of any kind.

2 And

NOTE

rious state of the church in this and the former part of the next chapter, as a large comment upon what had been more briefly said in the preceding chapter about the *Millenium*; and so confine it to the happy state of the church's thousand years reign with Christ on earth: And it must be owned that several passages, especially taken by themselves, seem to have an aspect that way. But it appears to me, that, viewing them in connection with the whole, they may fairly admit of a construction, (as may be seen in their places) very consistent with the heavenly glory; and that there are other expressions too high and strong to be applied to any state short of heaven itself. As, for instance, here the saints *see the face of God* and the Lamb, (chap. xlii. 3, 4.) which the Scripture always represents as peculiar to the heavenly state; and their reigning here is said to be *for ever and ever*, (chap. xlii. 5.) after the general resurrection and judgment, (chap. xx. 12, 13.) in opposition to their reigning a *thousand years on earth*, after the *first resurrection*; and it is not said of them that they shall not die, only that the *second death has no power on them*. (Chap. xx. 4, 6.) But it is said of this blessed state, *There shall be no more death*. (Chap. xxi. 4.) Other particulars of like sort will appear in the exposition. (See also *Durham's* first lecture on the place.)

And as it might justly be thought strange, that a prophecy, which is all along designed for the support, encouragement, and comfort of the church under all present tribulations, should give us no view of the final, complete, and everlasting happiness of all true believers, and suffering saints, in heaven; so it looks like perplexing and subverting the orderly progress of the prophecy, to suppose, that after an account of the *general judgment*, and *the misery of the wicked*, at the close of the last chapter, no notice should be taken of the *heavenly blessedness* of the righteous; but that, instead thereof, our thoughts should be carried back again to the *Millenium* which preceded them. Upon the whole, therefore, I am most inclined to think with others, that the regular series of the prophecy requires that, after it had led us to the universal judgment, and the punishment of the damned, (chap. xx. 11, — 15.) it should of course go on to the state of the church triumphant in heaven, as the crowning part of its noble design for raising the hopes and joys of believers under all present trials and afflictions; (vid. *Pol. Synops.* and our note on 1 *Pet.* iii. 13.) Or that, if it be supposed to have any relation to the *Millenium*, it is only to what will then be fulfilled *in part*, as a lively figure of what will be *much more gloriously* completed in the heavenly state.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

2 And I John who had all these visions, and have faithfully recorded them, saw the church of Christ shining in her brightest glory; which was represented to me under the figure of the city of the Lord, as made perfect in holiness, even the *heavenly*, which may be styled the *new Jerusalem*, on account of its excellency, and in contradistinction to the ancient and beloved city of that name upon earth; this being a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God; (Heb. xi. 10.) a plan of which was exhibited to my view, as descending from God's throne out of heaven toward me, to give me an opportunity of the more distinctly and critically observing it; * and to assure me that its original is from heaven, that no such city was ever on earth, and that all its glory shall be perfected in heaven. It made a most beautiful and delightful appearance, which may be compared to that of an amiable bride, richly adorned, and quite ready to meet her bridegroom on the day of solemnizing their marriage; this holy city being an emblem of the church, which is espoused to Christ, and shall then appear in robes of righteousness and of immortal light and honour, and be *presented faultless before the presence of his glory* with exceeding joy, (*Jude, ver. 24.*)

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

3 And the meaning of this vision was explained by a loud articulate voice, which I heard, as coming out from heaven, saying, in allusion to the *Shechinah*, which appeared in the tabernacle, as an illustrious token of the divine presence among the *Israelites*. Behold, God has fixed his most glorious residence in the midst of his heavenly church, which consists of the whole number of his chosen, redeemed, and called from among men of all nations; And he will henceforth dwell perpetually in the most immediate manner with them, and they shall be owned and honoured by him as his peculiar people, and the great God himself will intimately commune with them; and, suitable to the near relation into which he has taken them, as their covenant God and Father, will make up a complete portion of all possible happiness to them in the full enjoyment of himself for ever and ever. (*Chap. xxii. 5.*)

NOTE

* Though, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, is represented as coming from God out of heaven, here, and in ver. 10. This may relate to its draught of waters visibly descending from thence to the apostle John, that he might distinctly view it, as the *sheel* did so Peter in his vision. (*Acts. i. 11.*) rather than to the place where the city itself should be

And the same manner of expression follows with relation to the great voice out of heaven, which our apostle heard, ver. 1. (*ix. xv. cxxxviii.*) However the heavenly state itself is expressed by the very same phrase, *chap. iii. 12.* and is called our house, which is from heaven, 2 Cor. v. 2. (*18. cxxxviii.*)

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

And he said unto me, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

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And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

And he said unto me, I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

4. And in this state of heavenly bliss, God, by his immediate presence, will not only relieve their sorrows, but entirely remove them, that they may never have the least occasion to weep, or ever shed a tear, as formerly, on any account whatsoever; and there shall be no more mortality or liability to death, as there was while they lived in the lower world; nor shall there be any thing of a grievous nature to afflict them; nor any outcry, (*κλαυγ*) by reason of oppression, fright, or fears; nor shall there be any more pain or sickness of body, or anguish of spirit, which they were subject to while they dwelt in mortal flesh: For all defective and uncomfortable things, and sin, the root and cause of them all, are in that glorious state absolutely and eternally banished to the remotest distance from them: They are all over and gone, never to return, that nothing may ever interrupt or abate their consummate happiness; which is more than can be said of any condition on this side heaven. (See the notes on ver. 1. and chap. xx. 4.)

5. And as an additional confirmation of all this, The blessed * God, who has been often represented in my visions, as sitting upon the throne, said, Behold with admiration and joy, I make an entire change, by my power and grace, in the present state of all things, and completely new-form all the happy and holy inhabitants of the new world. And these are matters of so high importance for supporting and encouraging the faith, hope, and patience of the church, under all its tribulations on earth, that he commanded me to record them in writing for their comfort: For, said he, all these declarations are infallibly true, and shall faithfully be performed to their eternal joy.

6. And, for their further encouragement, he said to me, with respect to this wonderful change, The consummation of all things is now come; all the elect

A a a z

NOTE.

* He that sat upon the throne, may possibly be meant of Christ: For I do not find that, in either of the foregoing or following visions, God the Father is ever represented, as immediately speaking and giving orders to the apostle; and Christ had appeared, as seated upon a great white throne for judgment, (chap. xx. 11.) and might here call himself Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, (ver. 6.) which in several places of this book are titles, that, I think, he assumes to himself. (See the notes on chap. i. 4. 8.)—The promise to him that overcomes, (ver. 7.) evidently agrees with, and is a summary of, all his re-

peated promises to him that overcomes, in the second and third chapters; and his adding here, I will be his God, and he shall be my son, may be said by him, as well as by the Father; since he is called the mighty God, and the everlasting Father, (Isa. ix. 6.) and his people are called his seed, (chap. liii. 10.) and he is said to give them power to become the sons of God. (John i. 12.) And as he will present them to himself a glorious church; (Eph. v. 27.) so he will present them as his children to his Father, saying, Behold, I, and the children which God has given me. (Heb. ii. 13.)

ing, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.

are gathered in, the whole scheme of providence and redemption, and of my love and grace to them is completed; and all the prophecies, contained in this and the foregoing visions relating to their sufferings and glory, and to the destruction of their enemies, are now brought to their final issue. To this he added concerning himself, in allusion to the first and last letters of the *Greek* alphabet, I am *Alpha* and *Omega*; the Author and Finisher both of the old and new worlds, and of the happiness of my people from first to last; and am unchangeably existent, eternally before, and after all these dispensations. (See the note on *chap. i. 8.*) And whosoever is sensible of his wants, and earnestly desirous of spiritual and heavenly blessings, even unto eternal life, like one that is vehemently athirst, and longs for refreshment, to him will I freely, of my own mere favour, give abundant satisfaction and delight, to the utmost of his wishes, in my immediate presence; which may be compared to an everflowing and overflowing fountain of life and consolation, whose perpetually springing waters never fail.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

7 He who, warring a good warfare, with faith and patience, against sin, Satan, and his instruments, and against all the temptations of this present evil world, gains the victory over them, in humble dependence on my strengthenings, shall be possessed of an everlasting inheritance of glory, and of every thing that can contribute to his happiness: And I, the all-comprehending good, and rightful disposer of all things, will be his God and portion for ever; and he shall be partaker of all the exalted privileges of his adoption, as my son. (See the note on *ver. 5.*)

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

8 But, on the contrary, they that are ashamed, or refuse to own and honour me, through cowardice, or fear of reproaches and sufferings on that account; and they that reject the grace of the gospel, through unbelief, and are distrustful of my power, mercy, and promises to support them under, and carry them through all tribulations to eternal glory; and flagitious sinners, that indulge unnatural lusts, like the detestable *Sodomites*; and murderers in heart or deed; and especially infamous persecutors of my people unto death; and unclean persons, that are addicted to fornication, or adultery; and dealers with familiar spirits, or pretenders so to be; and worshippers of images, or of any that are not by nature God; and they that speak falsehoods and lies in hypocrisy, with intent to deceive and impose upon others: All and every one of these, living and dying in impenitence and unbelief, shall have their deserved portion of the most exquisite torments, like persons thrown alive in-

to a great collection of burning-hot materials, such as fire and brimstone; which may be called the second and most terrible death, as it comes after the death of the body, and is an absolute deprivation of all comfort, and an endless intolerable complication of all possible misery.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

Then, to give me a further account of the blessedness of the righteous, there drew near to me one of the seven angels, that were represented in a former vision; (*chap. xvi. 1. and xvii. 1.*) as employed in executing the seven last judgments, which were signified by pouring out the seven last cups or vials of the wrath of God upon his enemies for their destruction; and he in a free and friendly manner called to me, saying, Come up hither, and I will set before you a particular and distinct emblematical view of the state of the church in her advancement to heavenly glory, suitable to her dignity as the bride, which Christ, the Lamb that was slain, has purchased with his own blood, and espoused to himself in an everlasting covenant, that she, when fully prepared for him by the graces of his Spirit, might celebrate her nuptials with him; as her glorious husband, in all the solemnity, splendor, and joy of the highest marriage-festival.

ried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

10 And this angel, methought, in the visions of my mind, conducted me to an exceeding great and lofty mountain, to give me the advantage of a clear and full prospect; and there he exhibited to my view a grand and glorious city of vast extent, and filled with an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, which, in allusion to *Jerusalem's* being called *the holy city*, (Matth. iv. 5.) bears that name, as being consecrated to God; and thoroughly sanctified by his Spirit: And I distinctly beheld the model of it, as coming down from God out of heaven, the habitation of his immediate presence. (See the note on ver. 2.)

12 Having the
glory of God: and
her light *was* like
unto a stone most
precious, even like
a jasper-stone, clear
as crystal;

11 This city of the living God, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, was figured out to me as filled with the divine glory, the visible symbol of which formerly appeared in the *Jewish* tabernacle and temple, as the token of God's dwelling in a way of special grace and favour there: And its light of knowledge, purity, honour, and joy, was illustriously bright, like a most excellent stone, even like a splendid jasper-stone, as shining as crystal.

12. And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates; and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which

12. And it was further represented to me, as a city of the greatest beauty, strength, and security, encompassed about with an exceeding thick and high wall: Which may be considered as an emblem of the almighty and invincible power of the great God and Saviour, for the safety and defence of all its blessed inhabitants:

which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

inhabitants: In the wall there appeared twelve gates of entrance from all quarters; which might intimate that the only door of salvation by Jesus Christ had been opened, through all parts of the earth, in the ministry of the twelve apostles: And at the twelve gates, methought, I saw twelve angels, one at each gate, standing as guards of state at every avenue of the city and palace of the great King, and as ministering spirits to open the gates to all the heirs of salvation, and to shut them against all that were not written in the Lamb's book of life: (*ver.* 27.) And I saw an inscription of names, one upon each gate, which represented the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; and may be considered as emblematical of the whole church of Christ, which was typified by them, and consisted of all the spiritual Israel, that were admitted into this glorious city, there to abide for ever.

13 On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west, three gates;

13 The position of these gates on each side of this large four-square city, (*ver.* 16.) appeared to be in the following manner, answerable to *Ezekiel's* vision of its type, after the names of the tribes of Israel. (*Ezek.* xlviii. 31,—34.) On the east side were three gates, upon which were written the names of *Joseph*, *Benjamin*, and *Dan*: On the north side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Reuben*, *Judab*, and *Levi*: On the south side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Simeon*, *Issachar*, and *Zebulon*: And on the west side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Gad*, *Asher*, and *Naphtali*, to intimate that none, who in reality belong to the true Israel of God, shall be excluded from this general assembly and church of the first-born. (*Heb.* xii. 23.)

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

14 And the wonderful wall of this magnificent city was represented as having twelve foundations, on which (in allusion to the custom of inscribing the names of those that lay the first stone in buildings, for a perpetual remembrance of them) there seemed to be written the names of the twelve apostles of Christ, the Lamb of God, who redeemed the church with his own blood, and was laid in the doctrine and ministrations of those first and chief master-builders, as its only foundation, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* (*Eph.* ii. 20.)

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

15 And the angel that communed with me appeared as having in his hand a measuring reed of pure gold, a suitable emblem of the pure and spotless state of this glorious city, and of all that pertained to it: With this, he took the dimensions of the city itself, and of its gates, and of its wall; which may be considered

considered as a figurative representation of its being a state of the most beautiful order and proportion; and that all admissions to it, and securities in it, are exactly according to the perfect rule of the uncorrupted word of God.

16 And the city
beth four-square,
and the length is
as large as the
breadth: and he
measured the city
with the reed,
twelve thousand
furlongs; the
length, and the
breadth, and the
height of it are e-
qual.

16 And it appeared by the measurement, that the
city was just four-square, of the very same dimensions
every way; the length being exactly equal to the
breadth; which might intimate the perfection, stabi-
lity, and uniformity of that blessed state of the church.
And in measuring this heavenly city with the golden
reed, it was found to be in compass twelve thousand
furlongs, which, reckoning eight furlongs to a mile,
are fifteen hundred miles; each of the four sides con-
taining the length of three hundred seventy-five miles;
a city of prodigious extent for the reception of an in-
numerable multitude of blessed inhabitants, far, yea,
incomparably far beyond all that ever was known up-
on earth. The length and breadth of it appeared to
be exactly equal, one to the other; * and its height
bore a just proportion to its length and breadth;
which may be considered as an emblem of the vast ca-
paciousness of the heavenly city for receiving and ac-
commodating the whole church, when collected alto-
gether, and of its entire harmony and beauty in every
part.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

17 Then, methought, he proceeded to measure the height of the wall of this holy city, and found that it rose up, from the foundation to the top, one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the common way of men's measuring from the elbow to the end of the middle finger, which is the same that was used by the angel in measuring the height of this wall; and so it appeared to be out of all danger of ever being scaled and invaded; and may be considered as a figurative representation of the absolute safety of the saints, in the heavenly world, from all assaults or disturbances from their enemies.

17 And the building of the wall
18 And the materials of this unfurmountable wall were represented in my vision, not as consisting of any thing

NOTE

* Mr. Lowman observes that it would be out of all proportion to suppose, that either the wall or buildings of the city are to be understood as of equal height with the length and breadth; and that the numbers in this and the next verse are evidently *typical*. (Perhaps he meant *mystical*.) In one, which is the measure of the breadth and length of the city, the mystical number twelve, (taken from the twelve apostles, is multiplied by a thousand; and in the other, which seems to be the measure of the height of the wall, the same mystical number, twelve, is multiplied into itself; and so the height of the wall is represented to be one hundred forty-four cubits, which makes about seventy-two yards, according to the lesser cubit, or about eighty-six yards, according to the greater. (See his notes on these two verses.)

wall of it was of thing so mean and brittle as brick, or common building-stone; but of the most durable, sumptuous, strong, and beautiful jasper-stone, to render it impregnable and secure against all decay, as well as surprisingly magnificent; which may be considered as an emblem of the everlasting and unchangeable state of blessedness and glory. And the august mansions of the city seemed to be all made of massy gold; or, at least, overlaid with the finest and purest gold, so exquisitely polished, that it appeared as bright and glittering, as the most shining mirror or clearest crystal; which may be considered as an emblem of the incomparable grandeur, riches, and delights of the heavenly state.

19. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was a jasper; the second, a sapphire; the third, a chalcodony; the fourth, an emerald; 20. The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysolite; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

The first part of it was represented as adorned with a jasper; the second, with a sapphire; the third, with a chalcodony; the fourth, with an emerald; the fifth, with a sardonyx; the sixth, with a sardius; the seventh, with a chrysolite; the eighth, with a beryl; the ninth, with a topaz; the tenth, with a chrysolite; the eleventh, with a jacinth; and the twelfth, with an amethyst. All which taken together, as being stones of the most illustrious and valuable kind, might figure out the variety and perfection of the glory of Christ.

NOTE

* I cannot pretend to determine what, or whether any thing particularly, was signified, in the mystical way, by the variety of these precious stones. But as far as I can learn from the best accounts I have met with of the stones themselves, the jasper is a stone of several colours, the most excellent of which is green, spotted with red or purple. The sapphire is of a sky-coloured blue, transparent, and very hard. The chalcodony is of a shining grey, clouded with yellow, or purple, or blue. The emerald is of

an exceeding fine green: The sardonyx is of a pale red: The sardius is like, if not the same with the cornelian stone, of a blood-colour: The chrysolite is green, with a shade of yellow: The beryl is of a pale green: The topaz is of a gold colour, transparent and hard: The chrysolite is of a yellowish green: The jacinth is of a violet or purple colour: The amethyst is of a colour nearly resembling the jacinth: And the pearl is a round, white, hard, and shining substance; and is commonly bred in a shell-fish.

Christ, the foundation; and of the church and its blessings, that are founded upon him.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl; and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

21 And the twelve gates of this glorious city of the living God were represented to me, as consisting of twelve pearls of the greatest worth and astonishing magnitude, each gate being only one large pearl; which might be emblematical of Christ, as the pearl of great price, and the only door of salvation and of entrance into heaven: And, methought, I saw a large opening, that may be compared to a vastly spacious street, where the inhabitants of the city met in full assembly; the pavement of which was of the finest burnished gold, shining with a lustre as clear and bright as crystal; which might be an emblem of the perfect purity, pleasure, and conversation of the general assembly and church of the first-born, in their holy and delightful communion one with another, and with their God in his immediate presence.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.

22 And though the allusion was all along to the city of Jerusalem; yet there was this remarkable difference, I saw no representation of a temple in this heavenly Jerusalem, as there was in the Millenium-state itself, in which the temple of God was opened: (see the paraphrase on chap. xi. 19.) For the great and blessed Lord God omnipotent, and Jesus Christ, the Lamb that was slain, are instead of a temple, as they dwell in an incomparably more glorious, visible, and immediate manner here, (chap. xxii. 4.) than ever was seen in the earthly temple at Jerusalem, or in the latter day glory; which might intimate, that all divine ordinances, as the appointed mediums of communion between God and his church in this world, shall entirely cease in the heavenly state: when, instead of them, the immediate presence of God essentially considered, as inclusive of Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be all in all, (see the note on 1 Cor. xv. 28.) with no other medium of conveying felicity and glory to the heavenly citizens, than the person of Christ, as Mediator, and God-man, in whom the glory of all divine counsels, perfections, and performances, in their most amiable aspect, will shine, as in their brightest mirror, for ever.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon

23 And so illustrious was this city in my vision, that there was no manner of occasion either for the sun by day, or the moon by night, to enlighten it; or

NOTE

Dr. Hammond observes, that here, and chap. xxii. 2. *The street, or broad place of the city, denotes a place of converse and resort; and so synagogues, or assemblies, and streets, are used together.*

in the same sense, *Matth. vi. 3.* And *Grotius* understands the street of the city to signify a place of public assembly, as in *1 Chron. xxii. 6.* and *Job xxix. 7.*

mean to shine in it: or for any creature to adorn or comfort its inhabitants, as there is in this world, and will be till the dissolution of all things. For the glory of God himself, a symbol of which was given in the *Shechinah* that filled *Solomon's temple*, (1 *Kings* viii. 10, 11.) and in the *transfiguration* of our blessed Lord, (*Matth.* xviii. 2. and 2 *Pet.* i. 17.) shone in the most perfect manner to illuminate the whole city; and the glorious Lamb, as in office-capacity, and clothed with human nature, is the purchaser of admission to this light, and the clear medium of it; and as God, in essential union with the Father and Spirit, inseparably concurs with them in diffusing it.

24 And those people of all nations of the earth, who, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, are saved from sin and the wrath to come, shall be admitted to enjoy its delightful and illustrious light, and to walk in sweet and holy communion together in the midst of it. And as the converted princes and potentates of the earth had employed all their riches, power, and honour, to subserve the interests of this celestial city; so they bring the products of their good influence into it, and cheerfully resign up all their dignity and authority for it, counting them as nothing, in comparison with it; the glory of which, methought, appeared to be inexpressibly more grand and beautiful, than if all the magnificence and precious treasures of the kingdoms of this world had been collected together to enrich and adorn it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And so absolutely safe are the inhabitants of this city in their sublime mansions, not merely by the height and strength of its walls, and the guard of angels, (*ver.* 6, 7.) but principally and supremely by the immediate protection of the divine presence; that there will be no need of shutting up its gates in the daytime, to secure them against invading enemies; (as is usual to do by cities on earth, when any danger threatens them) and if not in the day, not at all: For there shall be no night to favour any attempts against them; nor the least darkness of any kind, whether natural or civil, moral or spiritual, to interrupt, or obscure the light of glory, that will perpetually shine with *meridian-brightness* upon them.

26 And all that come to dwell there will bring the holy fruits of their faithful improvements of their riches and honours into it, and will gladly surrender for it whatever they had possessed of wealth, grandeur, and honour, in any nations of the lower world: All these glories will be swallowed up in that, which infinitely excels them; and its splendor may well be considered, as vastly superior to all that could be imagined,

gined, were all the affluence, gaiety, and magnificence of the highest ranks of people on earth to be amassed together, and laid out to embellish it.

And so perfectly pure and holy is this heavenly city, that though its gates are continually open; (ver. 25.) yet, as the uncircumcised and unclean were forbid entrance into the holy city of Jerusalem; (Isa. lii. 1.) so no person or thing, (πᾶς) no evil temper or disposition, thought, word, or deed, that is morally defiled by any iniquity, or is of a defiling nature, shall ever be permitted, on any account whatsoever, to enter into it: Nor any one that lives and dies in any known sin, which, whatever it be, God is of purer eyes than to look upon it, without detestation; (Habak. i. 13.) and particularly the sin of idolatry, which is, by way of eminence, the abominable thing that he hates; (Jer. xlv. 4.) nor any one that contrives, forges, or utters falsehoods with an intent to deceive; not one of either of these: But they, and they only, (chap. xx. 15.) shall be admitted into this blissful state, that were registered, as it were by name, in the Lamb's book of life, which contains all those that were given him by the Father, to be redeemed, and sanctified, and brought safe to glory, and that, by holy fruits and effects, shall be proved to be so in the great day of account.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Who can conceive the immense felicity and glory of the church triumphant in heaven? All the images of light, beauty, honour, and grandeur, and of riches, safety, and delight, that we are acquainted with, are but faint representations of it. It is all new, and surpassing every thing that can be found, or imagined in the present frame of the universe. It is the holy city of the living God, shining in all his glory; a city built on Christ, who was laid, as its only foundation, by the ministry of the twelve apostles; and its inhabitants consist of the whole number of the chosen and redeemed, called and faithful, as collected together, and brought into it, from all nations of the earth; its gates being open to them, who were typified by the twelve tribes of Israel. It is a state of complete and immortal bliss, absolutely secure and free from all darkness, pain, and uneasiness of every kind, and from death itself; those former things being passed away: And it is enlivened with all the joys and honours of a public solemnization of Christ's marriage with his church; it is inexpressibly more glorious than the most splendid city of beautiful, strong, and lofty walls, erected on solid foundations, and all embellished as with the most precious glittering stones; and magnificently adorned, as with gates of the most costly pearl, at which angels stand, like officers of state; and as if its streets were all over paved with the finest polished gold. All the riches and grandeur of the greatest monarchs, and of all nations of the earth, are so far exceeded by it, swallowed up in it, and cheerfully resigned for it, as not worthy to be compared with its heavenly treasures. It is illuminated, honoured, and blessed with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, as shining with amiable and divine majesty on their throne of glory, and as the beginners and perfecters of its happiness; inasmuch that it needs no creature enjoyments, like the sun and moon; nor any ordinances, like the temple at Jerusalem, to assist its heavenly entertainments: For God in Christ will be their God, and the everlasting fountain of all that is great and good; and they shall inherit all things, to the utmost of their wishes,

wishes, as the gift of free grace; and shall live together in holy, harmonious, and transporting fellowship with God, and Christ, and one another, in its ever-shining and unclouded light. But, alas! all that are ashamed of, or afraid to own the Lord, and every unbeliever and habitual sinner, with all other impenitent sinners, that are abominable in God's sight, shall be utterly excluded from the heavenly state, and have their portion in everlasting burnings, which is the second death. But, in opposition to these, all they, and none but they, that are written in the Lamb's book of life, as proved by its holy fruits, shall be admitted to the sublime enjoyments of this blessed city. These are the true and faithful sayings of God, which shall certainly have their full accomplishment to the insupportable misery of graceless sinners, and the consummate joy of saints for ever.

CH. A. P. XXII.

The description of the heavenly state is carried on under the figures of the water and tree of life, and of the throne of God and the Lamb, chap. xxi. 5. And, for a conclusion of the whole, the truth and certain accomplishment of all these prophetic visions are confirmed, by way of dialogue between the conducting angel, Christ himself, and the disciple John, who was forbidden to worship the angel, and ordered not to seal the prophecies of this book, which were soon to begin to be fulfilled in their order, and are so sacred as not to be added to, or diminished; upon pain of exclusion from all the blessings promised in them, which shall be conferred on the righteous, and denied to the wicked, when Christ shall come (as he said he quickly would) with a reward to every one, according to his works, 6.—16. To which the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and John adds his Amen, and closes all with the usual apostolic benediction, 17.—21.

PARAPHRASE.

AND he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

AND the conducting angel gave me some further emblematical representations of the heavenly Jerusalem, by a vision of a pure river, as clear as crystal, streaming freely and plentifully out of the fountain of the water of life, (chap. xxi. 6.) not through ordinances, but immediately from the throne of God and the Lamb, who are one in the divine nature, and whose throne, as divine persons, is one, from whence all blessings are derived in their utmost purity and perfection unto eternal life; which, in allusion to the river that watered the garden of Eden, (Gen. ii. 10.) or to the waters in Ezekiel's vision, (chap. xlvii. 1.—12.) may be considered as an emblem of the fulness of joy, that is in God's immediate presence, and of the immense pleasures that are at his right-hand for evermore. (Pl. xvi. 11.)

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river,

In the midst of the chief place of concourse, or principal street of the heavenly city, (see the note on chap. xxi. 21.) and on each side of the river which watered it, methought, there stood a delightful row

the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

of a most excellent kind of trees, * like those that *Ezekiel* saw in his vision, *on the bank of the river, one on one side, and one on the other*; (chap. xlvii. 7, 12.) Which may also be considered, in allusion to the tree of life in the midst of the earthly paradise, (*Gen.* ii. 9.) as an emblem of Christ, and of the immortal life of happiness, which all its inhabitants derive from him: And, in this figurative way, he was represented, in allusion to the twelve tribes of *Israel*, and the twelve apostles of the Lamb, (chap. xxi. 12, 14.) as yielding twelve sorts of fruit, to signify the greatest variety and abundance of the most delicious, spiritual, and heavenly entertainments, to the full satisfaction of *all the Israel* of God, according to the doctrine of the holy apostles: And this emblematical tree produced its pleasant ripe fruits, not once a-year only, like common trees; but continually, month after month, without the least intermission, or defect, for ever: And such was the excellent virtue of this tree of life, that its very leaves had a sovereign efficacy to perfect and maintain perpetual health and ease, and to prevent all infirmities, pains, and diseases in the souls, or bodies of the saints, that were admitted to partake of it, from among the various nations of the earth.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

3 Yea, so absolutely complete and confirmed is their happiness, that the curse, together with all its dismal effects and consequences, which the fall brought upon all mankind, and which came upon their first parents in the garden of *Eden*, (*Gen.* iii. 16,—19.) shall be actually, thoroughly, and finally removed from them for ever; so that there shall be no remainder of sin or sorrow, or any accursed person or thing there: But the glorious throne of God and of the Lamb, whose divine throne is *one*, shall be ever abiding in it, as the fountain of its felicity and delight, (*ver.* 1.) without mixture or alloy; and his faithful servants shall pay their solemn homage in the sublimest adorations and praises, and shall do the will of their God and Saviour in the most perfect manner, with all alacrity, constancy, and delight.

4 And

NOTE.

* Mr. Kennicott thinks, that this *a tree*, which is singular, is used *plurally* of life alludes to the trees on one ly, and tendered trees, *Gen.* iii. 2, 8.; *side, and on the other of the river*, in *Ezekiel's* vision, rather than to the tree through the history of the creation and of life in *Paradise*. (See his *Dissertation* on the tree of life, p. 93,—97.) emphatic article, or a necessary restriction in the sense.—But, perhaps, *Jab's* vision was only of one tree of life, whose particular extraordinary tree, (p. 75.) branches, extended to both sides of the and shews, (p. 81.) that the word (*וְעֵץ*) river.

And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

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4. And they shall have a beatific vision of the blessed God, like *seeing face to face*; (Matth. v. 8. and 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) and shall behold the Lord Jesus in all his glory, as God-man; and *see him as he is* with their bodily eyes, as well as with the eyes of their minds; (*John xvii. 24.* and 1 *John iii. 2.*) and, *beholding his face in righteousness, they shall bear his likeness*; (*Pl. xvii. 15.*) as conspicuously as if his name and the characters of his glorious and holy image were written on their foreheads, in like manner as *Holiness to the Lord*, was engraven on Aaron's mitre, which was put upon his forehead. (*Exod. xxviii. 36.—38.*)

5. And so illustrious will be their light of knowledge, purity, and joy, that there shall not be the least darkness of error, sin, or affliction; and such will be the perfection of this light, that they will have no occasion for creature-assistances to add to their comfort, such as the light of a candle, which is wont in this world to relieve the darkness of the night; or the light of the sun in the firmament to enlighten it by day; which may be considered as emblematical intimations that they shall neither have any need of the faint light of the ceremonial law; no, nor of the clearer light of the gospel, and of its ordinances of divine worship. For the Lord Jehovah himself is the immediate fountain of light to irradiate and fill them with his glory, that *in his light they may see light*, in all its beautiful and transforming manifestation: (*Psal. xxxvi. 9.*) And they shall reign, like kings on their thrones, with dignity and honour in his blissful presence to all eternity, which will make them a rich amends for all the tribulations that they endured with faith and patience on earth for his name's sake. (*See 2 Cor. iv. 17.*)

6. And the conducting angel, having led me through the visions, which ended in the final happiness and glory of the saints, said to me, All the things that you have heard and seen, and recorded for the use, encouragement, and benefit of the church in all ages, shall be faithfully accomplished, and are infallibly true, to be fulfilled in their order. And the Lord Jesus, who in his original nature is, with the Father and Spirit, the only living and true God, (see the note on *chap. i. 1.*) and who inspired and authorised his holy prophets of old to foretel the things which were revealed to them, relating to his sufferings, and the glory that should follow, (1 *Pet. i. 11.*) has sent me, his angel, with these divine messages to make known to his servants, of the New Testament-church, the things which shall begin to be performed

very soon after this revelation of them, till they be gradually completed in their proper series; and the fulfilment of them all will be in a little space of time, compared with eternity, when they will issue in the consummate happiness of the followers of the Lamb.

7 In further confirmation of all these things, Jesus himself spake, (*ver. 16, 20.*) saying, Observe with attention, admiration, and joy, I am just ready to begin the accomplishment of them, and to carry them on in their proper order, till all shall be fulfilled; and, comparatively speaking, I will ere long come, to put an end to all the troubles of my people, and perfect their felicity, in the heavenly state. He is a happy creature indeed, and shall be inexpressibly so for ever, who, in the several periods of accomplishment, carefully considers, and cheerfully embraces, and behaves suitable to the holy, encouraging, and comfortable design of the revelations, which are made in the prophecies recorded in this book; for the use of the church in all ages, till the whole scene shall be finished.

8 And I John, to whom the revelations were made, had all along visionary prospects of all these important things, and heard what was said to explain and confirm them. And when in this manner I had been informed of all the particulars that have been recited, I was wonderfully affected with them, and in a sudden rapture, which almost overpowered my mind, (*see the note on chap. xix. 10.*) I again, through want of recollecting my former error and rebuke for it, prostrated myself, in a posture of adoration, at the feet of the angel, who, by Christ's commission, as I afterwards found, (*ver. 9.*) had discovered these things to me.

9 Upon his perceiving this, he instantly reprov'd, and prevented me, saying, Take heed of paying any religious homage to me, who have no claim to it: For I am not Jesus the Saviour, but only one of his servants, that worship, and adore him, and do his will; and am not the author of these revelations, but a messenger, like yourself, to communicate them to you, as you are to do to the church; and I have herein only acted the part of a fellow-servant with you, and with your brethren in office, the prophets, apostles, and ministers of the gospel, and with the saints, that shew a just regard to the things delivered in this prophetic book. Let therefore all your adoration, or religious worship, be paid to the only true God, to whom alone it is due. For the nature of things, and the divine command have fixed an unalterable

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

* As Christ had spoke, *ver. 7*: so in this and the next verse, (unless we make them and *ver. 8*, & a parenthesis) the same person seems to be the speaker, who again said, *Behold I come quickly*, *See ver. 12*. And the things here delivered are the more solemnly enforced, on imposition of their being pronounced immediately by the Lord Jesus himself, as giving the charge that this revelation should be made known for the use of the

terable obligation to worship the Lord thy God, and him only to serve. (*Matth. iv. 10.*)

10 And, the angel, or rather Christ himself, charged me, not to conceal the things contained in this prophecy, as though they were to be sealed up in the book which I had wrote, and so hid from the notice of the church, relating to the troubles they are to expect, and the glorious issues of them: For the time draws nigh, (said he) in which they shall begin to take place, and be carried on in a due series, till they all be fulfilled, which, compared with the succeeding eternity, will be but a little while hence.

11 Then the state and condition of all mankind shall be unalterably fixed, never to admit of any after-change; but the decisive irreversible sentence shall go forth, saying, He that is destitute of righteousness to give him acceptance with God, as found to be an evil-doer, Let him for ever remain in that deplorable state: And he that is under the prevailing defilement of sin, Let him never be cured of his loathsome disease: And on the other hand, he that is righteous before God for justification to eternal life, and appears to be so by his fruits of righteousness, Let him stand for ever justified in his presence: And he that is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, Let him be for ever holy, without blemish, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. (*Eph. v. 27.*) What every one now is, he shall be unchangeably, for misery, or happiness, to all eternity.

12 And the more strongly to assure the church of this, and to impress them with it, for their encouragement and joy, Behold, said the blessed Jesus again, (*see ver. 7.*) I am speedily coming at the appointed time, which shall not tarry, but hasten apace to bring all things to their final issue. And according to ancient prophecies of my coming with my reward, (*Isa. xl. 30. and lxii. 11.*) I, who as Mediator and Judge of the whole world, have all power in heaven and earth, will then distribute rewards of grace to the righteous and holy, and inflict condign punishment on the unrighteous

N O T E.

church, and as foretelling the condition of sinners and saints, in consequence of it; (*ver. 11.*) which some, taking the *imperative* for the *future tense*, consider as a prophecy of the different effects that this revelation would have upon them respectively; while others (to whom I incline) consider it as a sentence that will fix their state and temper at the final judgment.

every one according to the nature and proportion of what he has done in his body, whether it be good or bad, (2 Cor. v. 10.) as it shall then be found to be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first, and the last.

13 And still further to confirm all this, beyond doubt, he again asserted his own divine and mediatorial characters, as he had before, (*chap. i. 8.* see the note on *ver. 8.* there) saying, As the Greek alphabet begins with *Alpha*, and ends with *Omega*; so all dispensations of providence and grace, as well as the creation itself, begin and end in me, as the Author and Finisher of them; and I, who eternally existed before them, and shall do so unchangeably after them, will give them their final period at my second coming.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

14 Then it shall appear with uncontrollable evidence, that they are, and for ever shall be, unspeakably happy, who conscientiously attend to, and from a principle of faith and love, sincerely observe the commandments of God, in all moral obedience, together with all gospel institutions, and the duties which the Lord Jesus has enjoined in this prophetic book, who will be their judge at the last day, that they, being hereby proved to be my true and faithful disciples, may have the dignity and authority (*ἐξουσία*) by my free grant, (*chap. ii. 7.*) and it may be lawful for them to partake of all the great and glorious blessings that are produced by the tree of life; (see the paraphrase on *ver. 2.*) and, in consequence thereof, may have admission through the gates, which are even open for them, and them only, to enter into the city of God above. (*Chap. xxi. 27, 28.*)

15 For without dogs, and fornicators, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie,

15 For the wicked and ungodly of every character shall be shut out, and utterly excluded from all the honours and delightful entertainments of this glorious city; as particularly, such sinners and antichristian enemies, as for their impurities, opposition to the truth, and persecutions of the saints, may be likened to filthy, fierce, and voracious dogs; (see *Matth. vii. 6.* and *Phil. iii. 2.*) as also pretenders to conjuring and witchcraft, and unclean persons, that addict themselves to fornication, or adultery; and blood-thirsty murderers, that maliciously and unlawfully take away the life of others, or persecute any to death for righteousness sake; and worshippers of images and false gods, or of the true God by external symbols contrary to his institution; and whoever he be that contrives, has pleasure in, and designedly utters any falsehood to impose upon, and deceive his fellow-creatures; all which may be reckoned among the notoriously abounding crimes of the popish party: Whosoever

lives and dies under the guilt of any of these sins shall be cast into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matth. xxii. 13. See also Rev. xxi. 8.)

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

16 Then the Lord Jesus, to satisfy me that I was

under no delusion, and to add the greater weight and

authority to all that I had seen and heard, directed

his words to me, saying, I Jesus, the sovereign Lord

of angels, and the Lord God of the prophets; (see

the paraphrase on ver. 6.) it is I myself who employed

my angelic messenger to communicate all these things

to you, that they may be declared, as a testimony

from me (*ἐκ τῆς ἐκλογῆς*) concerning the church-

es, and in and among them of this and all succeeding

generations to the end of the world. I, who have

done this, neither will, nor can deceive you: For I,

as God, am the Root, Lord, and Source of David's

family and kingdom; and, as man, am David's son,

truly descended from his loins: (Matth. xxii. 42,—

45.) And, as was prophesied of the Messiah, (Numb.

xxiv. 17.) I am the star out of Jacob, like the bright

and morning-star, and the Sun of righteousness, shin-

ing in all my glory; (Malach. iv. 2.) I have arose to

put a total end to the night of antichristianism, and

to scatter all the darkness of ignorance and error, sin

and sorrow; and to usher in an eternal day of light,

purity, and joy, with unclouded lustre.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that hear-

eth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever

will, let him take the water of life freely.

17 And as these are matters of the greatest conse-

quence, for assuring the people of God of the certain

destruction of all their enemies, and of their own com-

plete and eternal salvation, the Spirit of prophecy

hereby testifies his approbation of it, and doth the

same, as he is the Holy Spirit that speaks in the

hearts of believers; and they, the Lamb's wife, in-

clusive of the church-militant and triumphant, say

with earnest desire and expectation, Come, Lord Jesus,

(ver. 20.) in all thy glory, to fulfil thy gracious pro-

misses, and solemnize the marriage with thine espoused

bride. (Chap. xxi. 2, 9.) And let every one that hears,

understands, and believes the things contained in this

prophecy, join with the Spirit and bride in saying,

Come, Lord Jesus: And let every one that thirsts af-

ter righteousness, and after the everlasting happiness,

which shall be brought to the church at the revelation

of Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. i. 13.) come by faith to him

for these most excellent of all blessings: And whoso-

ever is inclined and desirous to be made partaker of

them, let him come and welcome, to refresh his weary

soul by drinking gratis, without money and without

price, of the ever-flowing and overflowing water of

life,

lives and dies under the guilt of any of these sins shall be cast into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Matth. xxii. 13. See also Rev. xxi. 8.)

16 Then the Lord Jesus, to satisfy me that I was under no delusion, and to add the greater weight and authority to all that I had seen and heard, directed his words to me, saying, I Jesus, the sovereign Lord of angels, and the Lord God of the prophets; (see the paraphrase on ver. 6.) it is I myself who employed my angelic messenger to communicate all these things to you, that they may be declared, as a testimony from me (*ἐκ τῆς ἐκλογῆς*) concerning the churches, and in and among them of this and all succeeding generations to the end of the world. I, who have done this, neither will, nor can deceive you: For I, as God, am the Root, Lord, and Source of David's family and kingdom; and, as man, am David's son, truly descended from his loins: (Matth. xxii. 42,—45.) And, as was prophesied of the Messiah, (Numb. xxiv. 17.) I am the star out of Jacob, like the bright and morning-star, and the Sun of righteousness, shining in all my glory; (Malach. iv. 2.) I have arose to put a total end to the night of antichristianism, and to scatter all the darkness of ignorance and error, sin and sorrow; and to usher in an eternal day of light, purity, and joy, with unclouded lustre.

17 And as these are matters of the greatest consequence, for assuring the people of God of the certain destruction of all their enemies, and of their own complete and eternal salvation, the Spirit of prophecy hereby testifies his approbation of it, and doth the same, as he is the Holy Spirit that speaks in the hearts of believers; and they, the Lamb's wife, inclusive of the church-militant and triumphant, say with earnest desire and expectation, Come, Lord Jesus, (ver. 20.) in all thy glory, to fulfil thy gracious promises, and solemnize the marriage with thine espoused bride. (Chap. xxi. 2, 9.) And let every one that hears, understands, and believes the things contained in this prophecy, join with the Spirit and bride in saying, Come, Lord Jesus: And let every one that thirsts after righteousness, and after the everlasting happiness, which shall be brought to the church at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1 Pet. i. 13.) come by faith to him for these most excellent of all blessings: And whosoever is inclined and desirous to be made partaker of them, let him come and welcome, to refresh his weary soul by drinking gratis, without money and without price, of the ever-flowing and overflowing water of life,

life, which springs from him, (*chap. xxi. 6.*) and will be a fountain of all divine consolation, in its utmost fulness for ever, at his second coming to complete the prophecies of this book, which are to be believed, just as they are here revealed.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

18 For I, the divine Author of this revelation, (*ver. 20.*) and *the faithful and true Witness*, (*chap. iii. 14.*) do solemnly declare to every one that hears the prophecies contained in this book, relating to the affairs of the church and the world, which shall end in the final destruction of mine enemies, and the complete salvation of my people. If any one, be his character what it will, shall presume to add any pretended visions or revelations contrary to these; or shall wilfully pervert their meaning, by putting false interpretations upon them, God will certainly inflict upon him the dreadful punishments, that are threatened in this book, and particularly all those that are denounced against impostors and deceivers.

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

19 And if, on the contrary, any one shall dare to detract from, or go about wilfully to explain away, set aside, or nullify any part of the writings, or of the things written in this prophetic book, or shall perversely deny its divine authority, God, in his just resentment, will certainly cut him off from the interest that he professed, or hoped, or *seemed to have*, (*Luke viii. 18.*) in the Lamb's book of life; (*chap. xxi. 27.*) and from all the blessings of the heavenly and holy *Jerusalem*, and all the great and glorious things, which are promised in this prophetic book to them *that overcome, and are faithful unto death*; (*chap. ii. 7, 10, 17. and iii. 5, 12, 21.*) he shall be forever excluded from them: All which may be considered as a solemn and awful sanction to confirm, not only the divine authority of this book, but of the whole of the New Testament-revelation, as it closes its canon, in like manner, as *Moses* guarded the divine authority of the law, (*Deut. iv. 2. and xii. 32.*) and as God himself did the like, in closing up the canon of the Old Testament. (*Malachi iv. 4.*)

20 He which testifieth these things, saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

20 The Lord Jesus, who is the Author of the whole of this revelation, and so solemnly confirms it, (*ver. 18, 19.*) says, for the encouragement and comfort of the church under all their intermediate trials and afflictions, I am certainly coming, without delay, as soon as ever things are ripe, which will be ere long, for their perfect and everlasting happiness, and for the utter destruction of all their enemies, at the last day. Hereupon I, the writer of these prophecies, to express my faith, together with my earnest desire and

THE GRACE OF
OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST BE WITH YOU
ALL. Amen.

21 The grace of
our Lord Jesus
Christ be with you
all. Amen.

hope of it, said, *Amen*, in like manner as the whole church should cheerfully echo back to his voice, saying, So we rejoice and long to have it, and are fully satisfied it will be, Come, Lord Jesus, in all thy glory; Come quickly, as thou hast said, for our help, deliverance, and complete salvation.

21 In the mean while, to conclude the whole with an apostolic benediction, suitable to the state of the church, and to the duties incumbent upon it, during its afflictions and trials on earth, May the free love or favour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and all its special fruits and blessings, richly abound, and be manifested, in all seasonable supplies of grace and strength, support, guidance, and consolation, to all and every one of you in every age, who love, look, and long for his second coming! So may it be! And in testimony of my great desire, hope, and assurance of its being so, I heartily say, and let them all join with me in saying, *Amen*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a fulness of joy shall Christ's faithful followers have in the heavenly *Jerusalem*, to banish all their sorrows! There they shall drink at the fountain-head of the water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, as in the midst of them; and shall be ever feasting on the various, abundant, and delicious fruits of Christ's love and purchase, as the tree of life; and be perfectly free from all maladies of soul and body, and from all the dreadful effects and consequences of the original curse: They shall be publicly known and owned to be the Lord's; and shall dwell in the light of his immediate presence, and behold his face in righteousness, without any cloud or darkness at all. And O with what uninterrupted constancy, cheerfulness, and delight, will they then worship, serve, and glorify him! and with what dignity and honour reign with him for ever and ever! How unspeakable is the happiness of those that faithfully observe, and behave in a due correspondence to the prophecies of this book, which is laid open to be read and considered, for the support and comfort of the church under all its present troubles! They who, upon trial, shall be found true believers, by the fruits of their faith, in conscientiously observing the commands of God, shall be authorized and qualified to partake of all the blessedness of the celestial world, and be admitted to an enjoyment of it: But all the wicked and ungodly, of every character, shall be cast into outer darkness. The state and condition of every one shall be finally decided, for happiness, or misery, at Christ's second coming; and they who shall then be unrighteous and defiled, on one hand, or righteous and holy, on the other, shall continue to be so for ever. O solemn thought! How certain and important are these great events! They are testified by the apostle *John*, and by the angel, who conducted him in his visions, as his fellow-servant, but not as an object of religious worship, which is due to God only; yea, by Jesus Christ himself, who introduces the eternal day of light and glory, like the illustrious morning-star; and who as the Lord God of the prophets, sent his angel to communicate these things, and declared, again and again, that he would quickly come to execute them, in judgment and in mercy, till they all shall be fulfilled at the great day of account. How dangerous is it to add to, detract from, pervert, or deny these sacred records, or any other part of the word of God! We should dread doing any thing like either of these, as ever we would escape the torments threatened, and inherit the blessings promised, in this book. And how certainly may we depend on Christ's coming, ere long, with his rewards of justice and grace to every one, according to his works, whether they be good or bad! With a view hereunto he says, *Surely, I come quickly*. And what is the language of the Spirit in his word, and in the hearts

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Chap. xxii. The REVELATION paraphrased.

hearts of believers, and their language under his influence, but, *Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus!* In the mean while, How endearing and encouraging are gospel-invitations to thirsty souls to come by faith to Christ, and drink at free cost, and abundantly, of the water of life! That we severally may do so, while we are under the dispensation of gospel-grace, May the free love and favour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and every happy fruit and manifestation thereof be continually with us all! *Amen.*

AN

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE

OF THE
PRINCIPAL THINGS CONTAINED IN THE PARAPHRASE,

And Especially in the NOTES,

OF THIS AND THE FIVE FORMER VOLUMES.

N. B. *p* stands for *paraphrase*, and *n* for *notes*.

A

- A**BBA, some account of the word, with its signification, *n* Rom. 8. 15.
- Abomination of desolation**, what so called, and who, *p* and *n* Mat. 24. 15.
- Abraham**, his attempt to offer up his son vindicated, *n* Heb. 11. 17.
- Acceptance** of those that in every nation fear God and work righteousness, how to be understood, *n* Acts 10. 35.
- Accursed from Christ**, in what sense Paul wished himself so, *p* and *n* Rom. 9. 3.
- Act**, not uncommon to put this for the object in scripture, *n* chap. 4. 3.
- , judicial of God, in consequence of, and a just punishment for what, *n* John 12. 40.
- Adam**, a covenant-head, *n* Rom. 5. 14.
- and **Christ**, one being of the earth earthy, and the other, the Lord from heaven, relates to what, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 47.
- Added to the Lord**, the import of it, *n* Acts 11. 24.
- Address**, Peter's and the Pope's very different, *n* 1 Pet. 5. 1.
- Adorning, womens**, what sort thereof condemned, *n* 1 Tim. 2. 9.
- Adria**, where, *n* Acts 27. 47.
- Adultery**, the woman taken in, an ensnaring question put by the scribes and Pharisees to Christ about her, *n* John 8. 6.
- Agēs**, three of the world's continuance, according to the Jews, *n* 1 Cor. 10. 11.
- Agony**, Christ's, greater in soul than in body, *n* Luke 22. 44.
- Agrippa**, Son of Herod Agrippa, his good character, *n* Acts 25. 13.
- Alexander the copper-smith**, Paul's manner of speaking concerning him, no rule for us, *n* 2 Tim. 4. 14.
- Alive**, the all made so in Christ, who they are, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 22.
- Alone**, in what sense Christ was not so, *n* John 18. 16.
- Alpha and Omega**, Christ's calling himself so, a strong attestation to his true and proper divinity, *n* Rev. 1. 8.
- Altar**, at Athens by whom set up, *n* Acts 17. 23.
- , the souls that were under it, seems not to allude to the brazen altar, but to the altar of incense, *n* Rev. 6. 9.
- Amanuensis**, Paul often used one, *n* Rom. 16. 22. and Gal. 6. 11.
- Amen**, pronounced by the Jewish church, and by the primitive Christian church, at the end of the ministers' public thanksgiving and praise, *n* 1 Cor. 14. 16.
- Amphipolis**, why so called, *n* Acts 17. 1.
- Ananias**, the High Priest, Paul's reprimand of him how to be considered, *n* Acts 23. 3.
- Anathema**, Maranatha, the signification thereof, *n* 1 Cor. 16. 22.
- Ancestors**, Christ's, remarks upon them, *n* Matth. 1. 16.
- Angel**, tutelar or guardian, to every good man, no foundation in scripture for the notion, *n* Acts 12. 15.
- , another, Christ so called, *n* Rev. 7. 2. and 3. 3. and 18. 2.
- of the church, who so styled, *n* Luke 4. 17.
- Angels**, how many appeared to the women at Christ's sepulchre, *n* Mat. 28.

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5. and whether they did not appear to them also at another time, *n* John 20.
2. *Angel*, Christ's not taking on him their nature explained, *n* Heb. 1. 16.
- why Christ's pre-eminence above them proper to be insisted on, *n* Heb. 1. 4.
- the elect, not judges, but witnesses, *n* 1 Tim. 5. 21.
- Anger*, in its own nature not sinful, *n* Eph. 4. 26.
- when sinful or not *p* and *n* Mat. 5. 22.
- Antioch*, two places so called, *n* Acts 13. 14.
- Antipas*, uncertain who he was, *n* Rev. 2. 13.
- Antonia*, the castle of, how situated, *n* Acts 21. 36.
- Apophorisms*, why choice sentences so called, *n* Rom. 1. 1.
- Apostates*, strong expressions of good that may have been found in them, *n* 2 Pet. 2. 20.
- Apostles*, signify what; have no successors to their special characters, privileges, and powers, *n* Rom. 1. 1.
- Appearances*, Christ's to his disciples after his resurrection, not all taken notice of by any inspired writer, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 4.
- Areopagus*, an Athenian court of judicature, *n* Acts 17. 19.
- Aretas*, who, *n* 2 Cor. 11. 32.
- Arimathea*, *Joseph* of, not certain who, *n* Luke 23. 51.
- Ark*, *Noah's*, the figure and size of it, *n* Heb. 11. 7.
- , and the safety of those that were in it, prefigured, not baptism, but the gospel-salvation, *n* 1 Pet. 3. 20.
- Arm of the Lord*, what it signifies, *n* John xii. 38.
- Arms*, Roman law of, *n* 2 Tim. 2. 4.
- Armour*, why none for the back, *n* Eph. 6. 14.
- of righteousness, what meant by it, *p* and *n* 2 Cor. 6. 7.
- Article*, its being left out before the word *God*, an objection of little weight, *n* John 1. 1.
- Ascension*, Christ's, was by his own power, *n* chap. 20. 17.
- not swift but gradual, why, *n* Acts 1. 10.
- into heaven, the Socinian sense of it exploded, *n* John 3. 13.
- Asia*, the lesser, what and where, *n* 1 Pet. 1. 1.
- Asses*, rode upon by judges and kings of *Israel*, by *David*, and by Christ himself, *n* Mat. 21. 5.
- Attained*, different senses of the word, *n* Phil. 3. 12.
- Augustine*, the famous, what text he was converted by reading and reflecting upon, *n* Rom. 13. 13.
- Authority*, *Paul's* equal to *Peter's*, *n* Gal. 2. 11.
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- Baal*, an idol of the *Sidonians*, *n* Rom. 11. 4.
- Babler*, what the critics say about its meaning, *n* Acts 17. 18.
- Balances*, a pair of, emblematical of affliction, *n* Rev. 6. 5.
- Baptism*, the mode of it, *p* and *n* Mat. 3. 6.
- large quantity of water not necessary to, *n* Mark 14. 22.
- *John's* and the Christian, wherein they agree, and wherein they differ, *n* Luke 3. 16.
- not administered by Christ himself, for what reason, *n* John 4. 2.
- of *John*, what it relates to, *n* Acts 1. 22.
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- Infant and adult, consistent in different circumstances under the gospel-state, *n* chap. 10. 47.
- why not said to be administered to *Gentile* proselytes in the instituted form, *n* chap. 2. 38. and 10. 48.
- the mode of it not signified by our being buried with Christ, *n* Rom. 6. 4. and *n* Col. 2. 12.
- Baptized*, how *Israel* were so in the cloud and in the sea, *n* 1 Cor. 10. 2.
- Baptizing* the household, what meant by it, *n* chap. 1. 16.
- Barnabas*, an apostle, and *Saul's* fellow-pupil under *Gamaliel*, *n* Acts 9. 27.
- Beast*, his number, very difficult to settle, *n* Rev. 13. 18.
- Beasts*, the apostle's fighting with them at *Ephesus*, differently explained, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 32.
- Beelzebub*, its signification, *n* Luke 11. 15.
- Beginning*, in the, how understood by the Socinians, *n* John 1. 1.
- chosen from the, what it means, *n* 2 Thess. 2. 13.
- Belial*, its signification, *n* 2 Cor. 6. 15.
- Believers*, equally God the Father's, Christ's, and the Holy Ghost's property, *n* 1 Cor. 6. 20.
- Bereans*, of a religious spirit before *Paul* preached to them, *n* Acts 17. 11.
- Bernice*, a lady of no good character, *n* chap. 25. 13.
- Bethany*, from whence Christ ascended, where it was, *n* Luke 24. 50.

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- Bishops**, or pastors, to attend the spiritual, and deacons the temporal concerns of the church, *n* Rom. 12. 7.
- Christian, who, *n* 1 Pet. 5. 4.
- the same with elders, *n* Phil. 1. 2.
- Blasphemy**, against the Holy Ghost, what, *p* and *n* Mat. 12. 3. and *n* Acts 13. 45.
- Blessing God**, our, how different from his blessing us, *n* Eph. 1. 3.
- Blood**, moss turned into, metaphorical, *n* Acts 2. 20.
- Blood**, the eating of it, not in its own nature sinful, why forbid, *n* Acts 15. 20.
- the manner of sprinkling it, *n* Heb. 9. 19.
- of the paschal Lamb, the sprinkling of it, a temporary ordinance, *n* chap. 11. 28.
- of *Abel*, what intended thereby, *n* chap. 11. 24.
- Body**, Christ's, did not penetrate the door of the room where the disciples were assembled, *n* Luke 24. 37.
- of *this death*, the apostle's meaning by it, *n* Rom. 7. 24.
- fins without it, what they are, *n* 1 Cor. 6. 18.
- *Paul's* keeping it under, no argument for Popish penances, *n* chap. 9. 27.
- future rewards and punishments to be received by that, as well as by the soul, *n* 1 Cor. 5. 10.
- *in one*, what meant by it, *n* Eph. 2. 16.
- *a, hast thou prepared me*, how reconciled with *Pf.* 40. 6. *n* Heb. 10. 5.
- Bondage**, great confidence in the *Jews* to say they never were in any, *n* John 8. 35.
- Bone**, of the paschal lamb not to be broken, prefigured what, *n* chap. 19. 36.
- Book**, the volume of, its meaning, *n* Heb. 10. 7.
- Books**, of the ancients, different in form from ours, *n* Rev. 5. 1.
- Born out of due time**, in what sense *Paul* was so, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 8.
- Bosom**, *Abraham's* what the meaning of it, *n* Luke 16. 22.
- Bottles**, formerly made of leather, *n* Mark 2. 22.
- Branch**, grafting it with its buds, what it intimates, *n* Rom. 11. 17.
- Branches**, withered, what men's gathering them signifies, *n* John 15. 6.
- Bread**, and daily bread, what, *n* Mat. 6. 11.
- eating of it in the kingdom of God, a metaphor signifying the advantages of religion here; and the blessedness of heaven hereafter, *n* Luke 14. 15.
- Bread**, called Christ's body, at the paschal supper was the *passover*, *n* chap. 21. 19.
- breaking of it, an expression of different significations, *n* Acts 2. 46.
- Brethren**, Christ's who, *n* Mat. 12. 46.
- when Christ first directly called his disciples so, *n* John 20. 17.
- a term not always used by *Paul* with respect to the same sort of persons, *n* Acts 13. 4.
- Brightness of the Father's glory**, what intimated by Christ's being styled so, *n* Heb. 1. 13.
- Built all things**, the meaning of it, *n* chap. 3. 4.
- Bull**, a severe one of Pope *Martin's*, *n* Rev. 13. 17.
- Buried with Christ**, what it relates to, *n* Col. 2. 12.

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- Cæsar**, the prudence of *Paul* in appealing to him, *n* Acts 26. 32.
- Caiaphas**, his prophecy, the extent of it, *n* John 11. 51.
- Cainan**, why inserted by *Luke*, *n* Luke 3. 36.
- Calling upon the name of the Lord**, applied to Christ, *n* Acts 2. 21.
- of God according to his purpose, what it relates to, *n* Rom. 8. 28.
- *your*, what meant by it, *n* 1 Cor. 1. 26.
- Candace**, a common name of the Ethiopian queens, *n* Acts 8. 27.
- Candlestick**, the weight and form of it, *n* Heb. 9. 2.
- Captains of the temple**, who, *n* Luke 22. 52. and *n* Acts 4. 1.
- Carnal**, believers not absolutely, but comparatively so, *n* 1 Cor. 3. 1.
- Carpenter's trade**, Christ said to work at it, *n* Luke 2. 51.
- Cast away**, *Paul* in no doubt about his being so, *n* 1 Cor. 9. 27.
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